

THE
WORKS

OF

WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

VOL. XXVI.

ROMANCES VOL. XVII.

ZWICKAU,

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.

1822.

THE

W O R L D

OF

THE EAST INDIES

AND
THE
WEST INDIES

AND THE
AFRICAN

AND THE
AMERICAN

AND THE
EUROPEAN

AND THE
ASIAN

AND THE
AFRICAN

TALES OF MY LANDLORD,

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED

BY

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

*Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirke to Jonny Groats',
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede ye tent it,
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,
An' faith he'll prent it.*

BURNS.

VOL. I.

THE BLACK DWARF. P. I.

ZWICKAU,

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.

1822.

TAYLOR
OF MY LAND
COLLECTED AND ARRANGED
BY
JEDIDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM



Vol. I
THE BLACK BERRY P.I.
SWICKAL
PRINTED FOR GEORGE SERRAVALLO
1852

Ahora bien, dixo el Cura, traedme, senor huésped, aqueles libros, que los quiero ver. Que me place, respondió el, y entrando, en su aposento, sacó dél una maletilla vieja cerrada con una cadenilla, y abriéndola, halló en ella tres libros grandes y unos papeles de muy buena letra escritos de mano. — DON QUIXOTE, Parte I. Capitulo 32.

It is mighty well, said the priest; pray, landlord, bring me those books, for I have a mind to see them. With all my heart, answered the host; and, going to his chamber, he brought out a little old cloke-bag, with a padlock and chain to it, and opening it, he took out three large volumes, and some manuscript papers written in a fine character. — JARVIS'S Translation.

Alonso Ben, hijo de Juan, y su mujer,
haciendo, o por su hijo, que los
en su lugar, respondiendo al y
sento, and del una familia de
una cadencia, y, y, y, y, y, y,
libros grandes y una y una y una
caritas de mano. — Don Juan, Juan
pinto 32

It is mighty well, said the priest, pray, lord,
lord, bring me those books, for I have a mind
to see them. With all my heart, answered the
host; and, going to his chamber, he brought
out a little old clock bag, with a padlock and
chain to it; and opening it, he took out three
large volumes, and some manuscript papers
written in a fine character. — Juan's face
glowed.

TO
HIS LOVING COUNTRYMEN,
WHETHER THEY ARE DENOMINATED
MEN OF THE SOUTH,
GENTLEMEN OF THE NORTH,
PEOPLE OF THE WEST,
OR
FOLK OF FIFE;
THESE TALES,
ILLUSTRATIVE OF ANCIENT SCOTTISH MANNERS,
AND
OF THE TRADITIONS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE
DISTRICTS,
ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR FRIEND AND LIEGE FELLOW-SUBJECT,
JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

7
HIS LOVING COUNTRYMEN,

WHETHER THEY ARE DISSEMINATED

MAN OF THE SOUTH,

CHIEFTAINS OF THE NORTH,

PEOPLE OF THE WEST,

OR

ONE OF THE

THESE TALE,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF ANCIENT SCOTTISH MANNERS,

AND

OF THE TRADITIONS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE

DISTRICTS,

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FRIEND AND NICE BELLOWS-SUBJECT,

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

TALES OF MY LANDLORD;

COLLECTED AND REPORTED BY

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM,

PARISH-CLERK AND SCHOOLMASTER OF CANDERCLEUCH.

INTRODUCTION.

As I may, without vanity, presume that the name and official description prefixed to this Proem will secure it, from the sedate and reflecting part of mankind, to whom only I would be understood to address myself, such attention as is due to the sedulous instructor of youth, and the careful performer of my Sabbath duties, I will forbear to hold up a candle to the day.

light, or to point out to the judicious those recommendations of my labours which they must necessarily anticipate from the perusal of the title-page. Nevertheless, I am not unaware, that, as Envy always dogs Merit at the heels, there may be those who will whisper, that albeit my learning and good principles cannot (lauded be the Heavens) be denied by any one, yet that my situation at Gandercleugh hath been more favourable to my acquisitions in learning, than to the enlargement of my views of the ways and works of the present generation. To the which objection, if, peradventure, any such shall be started, my answer shall be threefold:

First, Gandercleugh is, as it were, the central part, — the navel (*si fas sit diceri*) of this our native realm of Scotland; so that men, from every corner thereof, when travelling on their concernments of business, either towards our metropolis of law, by which I mean Edinburgh, or towards our metropolis and mart of

gain, whereby I insinuate Glasgow, are frequently led to make Gandercleugh their abiding stage and place of rest for the night. And it must be acknowledged by the most sceptical, that I, who have sat in the leathern arm-chair, on the lefthand side of the fire, in the common room of the Wallace Inn, winter and summer, for every evening in my life, during forty years by past, (the Christian Sabbaths only excepted) must have seen more of the manners and customs of various tribes and people than if I had sought them out by my own painful travel and bodily labour. Even so doth the toll-man at the wellfrequented turnpike on the Wellbraehead, sitting at his ease in his own dwelling, gather more receipt of custom, than if, moving forth upon the road, he were to require a contribution from each person whom he chanced to meet in his journey, when, according to the vulgar adage, he might possibly be greeted with more kicks than halfpence.

But, secondly, supposing it again urged that Ithacus, the most wise of the Greeks, acquired his renown, as the Roman poet hath assured us, by visiting states and men, I reply to the Zoilus who shall adhere to this objection, that, *de facto*, I have seen states and men also; for I have visited the famous cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, the former twice, and the latter three times, in the course of my earthly pilgrimage. And, moreover, I had the honour to sit in the General Assembly, (meaning, as an auditor in the galleries thereof) and have heard as much goodly speaking on the law of patronage, as, with the fructification thereof, in mine own understanding, hath made me be considered as an oracle upon that doctrine ever since my safe and happy return to Gandercleugh.

Again — and, thirdly, If it be nevertheless pretended that my information and knowledge of mankind, however extensive, and however painfully acquired, by constant domestic en-

quiry, and by foreign travel, is, natheless, incompetent to the task of recording the pleasant narratives of my Landlord, I will let these critics know, to their own eternal shame and confusion, as well as to the abashment and discomfiture of all who shall rashly take up a song against me, that I am NOT the writer, redacter, or compiler of the Tales of my Landlord; nor am I, in one single iota, answerable for their contents, more or less. And now, ye generation of critics, who raise yourselves up as if it were brazen serpents, to hiss with your tongues, and to smite with your stings, bow yourselves down to your native dust, and acknowledge that yours have been the thoughts of ignorance, and the words of vain foolishness. Lo! ye are caught in your own snare, and your own pit hath yawned for you. Turn, then, aside from the task that is too heavy for you; destroy not your teeth by gnawing a file; waste not your strength by spurning against a castle-

wall; nor spend your breath in contending in swiftness with a fleet steed; and let those weigh the Tales of my Landlord who shall bring with them the scales of candour, cleansed from the rust of prejudice by the hands of intelligent modesty. For these alone they were compiled, as will appear from a brief narrative which my zeal for truth compelled me to make supplementary to the present Proem.

It is well known that my Landlord was a pleasing and a facetious man, acceptable unto all the parish of Gandercleugh, excepting only the Laird, the Exciseman, and those for whom he refused to draw liquor upon trust. Their causes of dislike I will touch separately, adding my own refutation thereof.

His honour, the Laird, accused our Landlord, deceased, of having encouraged, in various times and places, the destruction of hares, rabbits, fowls, black and grey partridges, moor-pouts, and other birds, and quadrupeds, in

unlawful seasons, and contrary to the laws of this realm, which have secured, in their wisdom, the slaughter of such animals for the great of the earth, whom I have remarked to take an uncommon (though, to me, an unintelligible) pleasure therein. Now, in humble deference to his honour, and in defence of my friend deceased, I reply to this charge, that howsoever the form of such animals might appear to be similar to those so protected by the law, yet it was a mere *deceptio visus*; for what resembled hares were, in fact, *hill-kids*, and those partaking of the appearance of moor-fowl, were truly *wood-pigeons*, and consumed and eaten *eo nomine*, and not otherwise.

Again, the Exciseman pretended that my deceased Landlord did encourage that species of manufacture called distillation, without having an especial permission from the Great, technically called a licence, for doing so. Now I stand up to confront this falsehood; and, in

defiance of him, his gauging-stick, and pen and inkhorn, I tell him that I never saw, or tasted, a glass of unlawful aqua vitæ in the house of my Landlord; nay, that, on the contrary, we needed not such devices, in respect of a pleasing and somewhat seductive liquor, which was vended and consumed at the Wallace Inn, under the name of mountain dew. If there is a penalty against manufacturing such a liquor, let him show me the statute; and, when he does, I'll tell him if I will obey it or no.

Concerning those who came to my Landlord for liquor, and went thirsty away, for lack of present coin, or future credit, I cannot but say it has grieved my bowels as if the case had been mine own. Nevertheless, my Landlord considered the necessities of a thirsty soul, and would permit them in extreme need, and when their soul was impoverished for lack of moisture, to drink to the full value of their watches and wearing apparel, exclusively of their inferior

habiliments, which he was uniformly inexorable in obliging them to retain for the credit of the house. As to mine own part, I may well say, that he never refused me that modicum of refreshment with which I am wont to recruit nature after the fatigues of my school. It is true, I taught his five sons English and Latin, writing, book-keeping, with a tincture of mathematics, and that I instructed his daughter in psalmody. Nor do I remember me of any fee or honorarium received from him on account of these my labours, except the computations aforesaid. Nevertheless, this compensation suited my humour well, since it is a hard sentence to bid a dry throat wait till quarter-day.

But, truly, were I to speak my simple conceit and belief, I think my Landlord was chiefly moved to waive in my behalf the usual requisition of a symbol, or reckoning, by the pleasure he was wont to take in my conversation, which, though solid and edifying on the main,

was like a wellbuilt palace, decorated with facetious narratives and devices, tending much to the enhancement and ornament thereof. And so pleased was my Landlord of the Wallace in his replies during such colloquies, that there was no district in Scotland, yea, and no peculiar, and, as it were, distinctive custom therein practised, but what was discussed betwixt us, insomuch, that those who stood by were wont to say, it was worth a bottle of ale to hear us communicate with each other. And not a few travellers, from distant parts, as well as from the remote districts of our kingdom, were wont to mingle in the conversation, and to tell news that had been gathered in foreign lands, or preserved from oblivion in this our own.

Now I chanced to have contracted for teaching the lower classes, with a young person called Peter, or Patrick, Pattieson, who had been educated in our Holy Kirk, yea, had, by the licence of presbytery, his voice opened therein

as a preacher, who delighted in the collection of olden tales and legends, and in garnishing them with the flowers of poesy, whereof he was a vain and frivolous professor. For he followed not the example of those strong poets whom I proposed to him as a pattern, but formed versification of a flimsy and modern texture, to the compounding whereof was necessary small pains and less thought. And hence I have chid him as being one of those who bring forward the fatal revolution prophesied by Mr Robert Carey, in his Vaticination on the Death of the Celestial Dr John Donne:

Now thou art gone, and thy strict laws will be
Too hard for libertines in poetry;
Till verse (by thee refined) in this last age
Turn ballad rhyme.

I had also disputations with him, touching his indulging rather a flowing and redundant, than a concise and stately, diction in his prose exer-

citations. But notwithstanding these symptoms of inferior taste, and a humour of contradicting his betters upon passages of dubious construction in Latin authors, I did grievously lament when Peter Pattieson was removed from me by death, even as if he had been the offspring of my own loins. And in respect his papers had been left in my care (to answer funeral and death bed expences,) I conceived myself entitled to dispose of one parcel thereof, entitled „Tales of my Landlord,” to one cunning in the trade (as it is called) of bookselling. He was a mirthful man of small stature, cunning in counterfeiting of voices, and in making facetious tales and responses, and whom I have to laud for the truth of his dealings towards me.

Now, therefore, the world may see the injustice that charges me with incapacity to write these narratives, seeing, that though I have proved that I could have written them if I would, yet, not having done so; the censure will de-

servedly fall, if at all due, upon the memory of Mr Peter Pattieson; whereas I must be justly entitled to the praise, when any is due, seeing that, as the Dean of St Patrick's wittily and logically expresseth it,

That without which a thing is not,
Is *Causa sine qua non*.

The work, therefore, is unto me as a child is to a parent; the which child, if it proveth worthy, the parent hath honour and praise; but, if otherwise, the disgrace will deservedly attach to itself alone.

I have only further to intimate, that Mr Peter Pattieson, in arranging these Tales for the press, hath more consulted his own fancy than the accuracy of the narrative; nay, that he hath sometimes blended two or three together for the mere grace of his plots. Of which infidelity, although I disapprove and enter my testimony against it, yet I have not taken it upon me to

correct the same, in respect it was the will of the deceased, that his manuscript should be submitted to the press without diminution or alteration. A fanciful nicety it was on the part of my deceased friend, who, if thinking wisely, ought rather to have conjured me, by all the tender ties of our friendship and common pursuits, to have carefully revised, altered, and augmented, at my judgment and discretion. But the will of the dead must be scrupulously obeyed, even when we weep over their pertinacity and self-delusion. So, gentle reader, I bid you farewell, recommending you to such fare as the mountains of your own country produce; and I will only farther premise, that each Tale is preceded by a short introduction, mentioning the persons by whom, and the circumstances under which, the materials thereof were collected.

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

THE
BLACK DWARF.

XLVI.

A

T A L E I.

T H E

B L A C K D W A R F.

C H A P T E R I.

Preliminary.

Hast any philosophy in thee, Shepherd?

As You Like it.

It was a fine April morning (excepting that it had snowed hard the night before, and the ground remained covered with a dazzling mantle of six inches in depth) when two horsemen

rode up to the Wallace Inn. The first was a strong, tall, powerful man, in a grey riding-coat, having a hat covered with wax cloth, a huge silver-mounted horsewhip, boots, and dreadnought overalls. He was mounted on a large strong brown mare, rough in coat, but well in condition, with a saddle of the yeomanry cut, and a double-bitted military bridle, somewhat rusted. The man who accompanied him was apparently his servant; he rode a shaggy little grey poney, had a blue bonnet on his head, and a large check napkin folded about his neck, wore a pair of long blue hose instead of boots, had his gloveless hands much stained with tar, and observed an air of deference and respect towards his companion, but without any of those indications of precedence and punctilio which are preserved between the gentry and their domestics. On the contrary, the two travellers entered the court-yard abreast, and the concluding sentence of the conversation which had been carrying on betwixt them was a joint ejaculation, „Lord guide us, an' this weather last, what will come o' the lambs!" The hint was sufficient to my Landlord, who, advancing to take the horse of the principal person, and holding him by the reins as he dismounted, while his ostler rendered the same service to the attendant, welcomed

the stranger to Gandercleugh, and, in the same breath, enquired, what news from the south hie-lands? —

„News?” said the farmer, “bad eneugh news, I think; — an’ we can carry through the ewes it will be a’ we can do; we maun e’en leave the lambs to the Black Dwarf’s care.”

„Ay, ay,” subjoined the old shepherd, (for such he was) shaking his head, „he’ll be unco busy amang the morts this season.”

„The Black Dwarf?” said *my learned friend and patron*,* Mr Jedediah Cleishbotham, „and what sort of a personage may he be?”

„Hout awa, man, ye’ll hae heard o’ Canny Elshie the Black Dwarf, or I am muckle mista’en — A’ the world tells tales about him,

* We have in this, and other instances, printed in italics some few words which the worthy editor, Mr Jedediah Cleishbotham, seems to have interpolated upon the text of his deceased friend, Mr Pattieson. We must observe, once for all, that such liberties seem only to have been taken by the learned gentleman where his own character and conduct are concerned; and surely he must be the best judge of the style in which his own character and conduct should be treated of.

but it's but daft nonsense after a' — I dinna believe a word o't frae beginning to end."

"Your father believed it unco stievely, though," said the old man, to whom the scepticism of his master gave obvious displeasure—

"Ay, very true, Bauldie, but that was in the time o' the blackfaces — they believed a hantle queer things in thae days, that naebody heeds since the lang sheep cam in."

"The mair's the pity, the mair's the pity," said the old man. "Your father, and sae I have aften tell'd you, maister, wad hae been sair vexed to hae seen the auld peel-house wa's pu'd down to make park dykes, and the bonny broomy knowe, where he liked sae weel to sit at e'en, wi' his plaid about him, and look at the kye as they came down the loaning, — ill wad he hae liked to hae seen that braw sunny knowe a' riven out wi' the pleugh in the fashion it is at this day."

"Hout, Bauldie," replied the principal, "tak ye that dram the landlord's offering ye, and never fash your head about the changes o' the world, sae lang as ye're blythe and bien yoursel."

"Wussing your health, sirs," said the shepherd; and, having taken off his glass, and observed

the whiskey was the right thing, he continued, „it's no for the like o' us to be judging, to be sure; but it was a bonny knowe that broomy knowe, and an unco braw shelter for the lambs in a severe morning like this.”

„Ay, but ye ken we maun hae turnips for the lang sheep, billie, and muckle hard wark to get them, baith wi' the pleugh and the howe; and that wad sort ill wi' sitting on the broomy knowe and cracking about Black Dwarfs, and siccan clavers, as was the gate lang syne, when the short sheep were in the fashion.”

„Aweel, aweel, maister,” said the attendant, short sheep had short rents, I am thinking.”

Here my *worthy and learned* patron again interposed, and observed, „that he could never perceive any material difference, in point of longitude, between one sheep and another.”

This occasioned a loud horse-laugh on the part of the farmer, and an astonished stare on the part of the shepherd. „It's the woo', man, — its the woo' and no the beasts themsels, that makes them be ca'd lang or short. I believe, if ye were to measure their backs, the short sheep wad be rather the langer-bodied o' the twa; but it's the woo' that pays the rent in thae days, and it had muckle need.”

“Odd, Bauldie says very true, — short sheep *did* make short rents — my father paid for our steeding just threescore punds, and it stands me in three hundred, plack and bawbee. — And that’s very true — I hae nae time to be standing here clavering — Landlord, get us our breakfast, and see an’ get the yauds fed — I am for down to Christy Wilson’s, to see if him and me can gree about the luckpenny I am to gie him for his year-aulds. We had drank six mutchkins to the making the bargain at St Boswell’s fair, and some gate we canna gree about the particulars preceesely, for as muckle time as we took about it — I doubt we draw to a plea. — But hear ye, neighbour,” addressing my *worthy and learned patron*, “if ye want to hear ony thing about lang or short sheep, I will be back here to my kail against ane o’clock; or, if ye want ony auld-world stories about the Black Dwarf, and sic like, if ye’ll ware a half mutchkin upon Bauldie there, he’ll crack t’ye like a pen-gun. And I’s gie a mutchkin mysel, man, if I can settle weel wi’ Christy Wilson.”

The farmer returned at the hour appointed, and with him came Christy Wilson, their difference having been fortunately settled without an appeal to the gentlemen of the long robe. My *learned and*

worthy patron failed not to attend, both on account of the refreshment promised to the mind and to the body, *although he is known to partake of the latter in a very moderate degree*; and the party with which my Landlord was associated continued to sit till late in the evening, seasoning their liquor with many choice tales and songs. The last incident which I recollect, was my *learned and worthy* patron falling from his chair, just as he concluded a long lecture upon temperance, by reciting, from the Gentle Shepherd, a couplet, which he *right happily* transferred from the vice of avarice to that of ebriety :

He that has just eneugh may soundly sleep,
The owercome only fashes folk to keep.

In the course of the evening the Black Dwarf had not been forgotten, and the old shepherd, Bauldie, told so many stories of him, that they excited a good deal of interest. It also appeared, though not till the third punch-bowl was emptied, that much of the farmer's scepticism on the subject was affected, as evincing a liberality of thinking, and a freedom from ancient prejudices, becoming a man who paid three hundred pounds a-year of rent, while, in fact, he had a lurking belief in the traditions of his

forefathers. After my usual manner, I made farther enquiries of other persons connected with the wild and pastoral district in which the scene of the following narrative is placed, and I was fortunate enough to recover many links of the story, not generally known, and which account, at least in some degree, for the circumstances of exaggerated marvel with which superstition has attired it in the more vulgar traditions.

CHAPTER II.

*Will none but Hearne the Hunter serve your
turn?*

Merry Wives of Windsor.

IN one of the most remote districts of the south of Scotland, where an ideal line, drawn along the tops of lofty and bleak mountains, separates that land from her sister kingdom, a young man, called Halbert, or Hobbie Elliot, a substantial farmer, who boasted his descent from old Martin Elliot of the Preakintower, noted in Border story and song, was on his return from deer-stalking. The deer, once so numerous among these solitary wastes, were now reduced to a very few herds, which, sheltering themselves in the most remote and inac-

cessible recesses, rendered the task of pursuing them equally toilsome and precarious. But, however, there were found many youth of the country ardently attached to this sport, with all its dangers and fatigues. The sword had been sheathed upon the Borders for more than a hundred years, by the peaceful union of the crowns in the reign of James the First of Great Britain. Still the country retained traces of what it had been in former days; the inhabitants, their more peaceful avocations having been repeatedly interrupted by the civil wars of the preceding century, were scarce yet broken in to the habits of regular industry, sheep-farming had not been introduced upon any considerable scale, and the feeding of black cattle was the chief purpose to which the hills and vallies were applied. Near to the farmer's house he usually contrived to raise such a crop of oats, or barley, as afforded meal for his family; and the whole of this slovenly and imperfect mode of cultivation left much time upon his own hands, and those of his domestics. This was usually employed by the young men in hunting and fishing; and the spirit of adventure, which formerly led to raids and forays in the same districts, was still to be discovered in the eagerness with which they pursued those rural sports.

The more high-spirited among the youth were, about the time that our narrative begins, expecting, rather with hope than apprehension, an opportunity of emulating their fathers in their military achievements, the recital of which formed the chief part of their amusement within doors. The passing of the Scottish act of security had given the alarm to England, as it seemed to point at a separation of the two British kingdoms, after the decease of Queen Anne, the reigning monarch. Godolphin, then at the head of the English administration, foresaw that there was no other mode of avoiding the probable extremity of a civil war, but by carrying through an incorporating union. How that treaty was managed, and how little it seemed for some time to promise the beneficial results which have since taken place to such extent, may be learned from the history of the period. It is enough for our purpose to say, that all Scotland was indignant at the terms on which their legislature had surrendered their national independence. The general resentment led to the strangest leagues and to the wildest plans. The Cameronians were about to take arms for the restoration of the house of Stuart, whom they regarded, with justice, as their oppressors; and the intrigues of the period presented the strange picture of papists,

prelatists, and presbyterians, caballing themselves against the English government, out of a common feeling that their country had been treated with injustice. The fermentation was general; and, as the population of Scotland had been generally trained to arms, under the act of security, they were not indifferently prepared for war, and waited but the declaration of some of the nobility to break out into open hostility. It was at this period of public confusion that our story opens.

The cleugh, or wild ravine, into which Hobbie Elliot had followed the game, was already far behind him, and he was considerably advanced on his return homeward, when the night began to close upon him. This would have been a circumstance of great indifference to the experienced sportsman, who could have walked blindfold over every inch of his native heaths, had it not happened near a spot, which, according to the traditions of the country, was in extremely bad fame, as haunted by supernatural appearances. To tales of this kind Hobbie had, from his childhood, lent an attentive ear; and as no part of the country afforded such a variety of legends, so no man was more deeply read in their fearful lore than Hobbie of the Heugh-foot, for so our gallant was

called, to distinguish him from a round dozen of Elliots who bore the same christian name. It cost him no efforts, therefore, to call to memory the terrific incidents connected with the extensive waste upon which he was now entering. In fact, they presented themselves with a readiness which he felt to be somewhat dismaying.

This dreary common was called Meiklestane-Moor, from a huge column of unhewn granite, which raised its massy head on a knoll near the centre of the heath, perhaps to tell of the mighty dead who slept beneath, or to preserve the memory of some bloody skirmish. The real cause of its existence had, however, passed away; and tradition, who is as frequently an inventor of fiction as a preserver of truth, had supplied its place with a supplementary legend of her own, which now came full upon Hobbie's memory. The ground about the pillar was strewn, or rather encumbered, with many large fragments of stone of the same consistence with the column, which, from their appearance as they lay scattered on the waste, were popularly called the Grey Geese of Meiklestane-Moor. The legend accounted for this name and appearance by the catastrophe of a noted and most formidable witch who frequented

these hills in former days, causing the ewes to *keb*, and the kine to cast their calves, and performing all the feats of mischief ascribed to these evil beings. On this moor she used to hold her revels with her sister hags; and rings were still pointed out on which no grass nor heath ever grew, the turf being, as it were, calcined by the scorching hoofs of their diabolical partners.

Once upon a time this old hag is said to have crossed the moor, driving before her a flock of geese, which she proposed to sell to advantage at a neighbouring fair; — for it is well known that the fiend, however liberal in imparting his powers of doing mischief, ungenerously leaves his allies under the necessity of performing the meanest rustic labours for subsistence. The day was far advanced, and her chance of obtaining a good price depended on her being first at the market. But the geese, which had hitherto preceded her in a pretty orderly manner, when they came to this wide common, interspersed with marshes and pools of water, scattered in every direction, to plunge into the element in which they delighted. Incensed at the obstinacy with which they defied all her efforts to collect them, and not remembering the terms of the contract by which the fiend was bound

to obey her commands for a certain space, the sorceress exclaimed, „Deevil, that neither I nor they ever stir from this spot more!” The words were hardly uttered, when, by a metamorphosis as sudden as any in Ovid, the hag and her refractory flock were converted into stone, the angel whom she served grasping eagerly at an opportunity of completing the ruin of her body and soul, by a literal obedience to her orders. It is said, that when she perceived and felt the transformation which was about to take place, she exclaimed to the treacherous fiend, „Ah! thou false thief, lang hast thou promised me a grey gown, and now I am getting ane that will last for ever.” The dimensions of the pillar, and of the stones, were often appealed to, as a proof of the superior stature and size of old women and geese in the days of other years, by those praisers of the past who held the comfortable opinion of the gradual degeneracy of mankind.

All particulars of this legend Hobbie called to mind as he paced along the moor. He also remembered, that, since the catastrophe had taken place, the scene of it had been avoided, at least after night-fall, by all human beings, as being the ordinary resort of kelpies, spunkies, and other demons, once the companions of

the witch's diabolical revels, and now continuing to rendezvous upon the same spot, as if still in attendance on their transformed mistress. Hobbie's natural hardihood, however, manfully combated with those intrusive sensations of awe. He summoned to his side the brace of large greyhounds, who were the companions of his sports, and who were wont, in his own phrase, to fear neither dog nor devil; he looked at the priming of his piece, and, like the clown in Hallowe'en, whistled up the warlike ditty of Jock of the Side, as a general cause his drums be beat to inspirit the doubtful courage of his soldiers.

In this state of mind, he was very glad to hear a friendly voice shout in his rear, and propose to him a partner on the road. He slackened his pace, and was quickly joined by a youth well known to him, a gentleman of some fortune in that remote country, and who had been abroad upon the same errand with himself. Young Earnscliff, „of that ilk,” had lately come of age, and succeeded to a moderate fortune, a good deal dilapidated, from the share his family had taken in the disturbances of the period. They were much and generally respected in the country, a reputation which this young gentleman seemed likely to

sustain, as he was well educated, and of excellent dispositions.

“Now, Earnscliff,” exclaimed Hobbie, “I am glad to meet your honour ony gait, and company’s blithe on a bare moor like this — it’s an unco bogilly bit — Where hae ye been sporting?”

“Up the Carla Cleugh, Hobbie,” answered Earnscliff, returning his greeting. “But will our dogs keep the peace, think you?”

“De’il a fear o’ mine,” said Hobbie, “they have scarce a leg to stand on. — Odd! the deer’s fled the country, I think! I have been as far as Inger-fell-foot, and de’il a horn has Hobbie seen, excepting three red-wud raes, that never let me within shot of them, though I gaed a mile round to get up the wind to them, an’ a’. — De’il o’ me wad care mickle. only I wanted some venison to our auld gude-dame. — The carline, she sits in the neuk yonder, upbye, and cracks about the grand shooters and hunters lang syne — Odd, I think they hae killed a’ the deer in the country, for my part.”

“Well, Hobbie, I have shot a fat buck, and sent him to Earnscliff this morning — you shall have half of him for your grandmother.”

„Mony thanks to ye, Mr Patrick, ye're kend to a' the country for a kind heart. It will do the auld wife's heart gude — mair by token, when she kens it comes frae you — and maist of a', gin ye'll come up and take your share, for I reckon ye are lonesome now in the auld tower, and a' your folk at that weary Edinburgh. I wonder what they can find to do amang a wheen ranks o' stane-houses, wi' slate on the tap o' them, that might live on their ain bonny green hills.”

„My education and my sisters' has kept my mother much in Edinburgh for several years,” said Earnscliff, „but I promise you I propose to make up for lost time.”

„And ye'll rig out the auld tower a bit,” said Hobbie, „and live hearty and neighbour-like wi' the auld family friends, as the Laird o' Earnscliff should? I can tell ye, my mother — my grandmother I mean — but, since we lost our ain mother, we ca' her sometimes the tane, and sometimes the tother — but, ony gate, she thinks hersel no that distant connected wi' you.”

„Very true, Hobbie, and I will come to the Heugh-foot to dinner to-morrow with all my heart.”

“Weel, that’s kindly said! We are auld neighbours, an’ we were nae kin — and my gude dame’s fain to see you — she clavers about your father that was killed lang syne.”

”Hush, hush, Hobbie — not a word about that — it’s a story better forgotten.”

“I dinna ken — if it had chanced amang our folk, we wad hae keepit it in mind mony a day till we got some mends for it — but ye ken your ain ways best, you lairds — I have heard say that Ellieslaw’s friend stickit your sire after the laird himsel had mastered his sword.”

“Fie, fie, Hobbie; it was a foolish brawl, occasioned by wine and politics — many swords were drawn — it is impossible to say who struck the blow.”

“At ony rate, auld Ellieslaw was aiding and abetting, and I am sure if ye were sae disposed as to take amends on him, naebody could say it was wrang, for your father’s blood is beneath his nails — and besides there’s naebody else left that was concerned to take amends upon, and he’s a prelatist and a jacobite into the bargain — I can tell ye the country folk looks for something atween ye.”

“O for shame, Hobbie! you that profess religion, to stir your friend up to break the law, and take vengeance at his own hand, and in such a bogilly bit too, where we know not what beings may be listening to us!”

“Hush, hush!” said Hobbie, drawing nearer to his companion I was nae thinking o’ the, like o’ them — But I can guess a wee bit what keeps your hand up, Mr Patrick; we a’ ken its no lack o’ courage, but the twa grey een of a bonnie lass, Mis Isbel Vere, that keeps you sae sober.”

“I assure you, Hobbie,” said his companion, rather angrily, — “I assure you you are mistaken; and it is extremely wrong in you, either to think of, or to utter, such an idea; I have no idea of permitting freedoms to be carried so far as to connect my name with that of any young lady.”

“Why, there now — there now!” retorted Elliot; “did not I say it was nae want o’ spunk that made ye sae mim? — Weel, weel, I meant nae offence — but there’s just ae thing ye may notice frae a friend. The auld Laird of Ellieslaw has the auld riding blood far hetter at his heart than ye hae — troth, he kens naething about thae new-fangled notions o’ peace and quietness — he’s a’ for the auld-world doings of lifting and laying on, and he has a

wheen stout lads at his back too, and keeps them weel up in heart, and as fu' o' mischief as young colts. Where he gets the gear to do't nane can say — he lives high, and far abune his rents here — however, he pays his way — Sae, if there's ony outbreak in the country, he's likely to break out wi' the first — and weel does he mind the auld quarrels between ye. I'm surmizing he'll be for a touch at the auld tower at Earnscliff."

"Well, Hobbie, if he should be so ill advised, I shall try to make the auld tower good against him, as it has been made good by my betters against his betters many a day ago."

"Very right — very right — that's speaking like a man now — and, if sae should be that this be sae, if ye'll just gar your servant jow out the great bell in the tower, there's me, and my twa brothers, and little Davie of the Stenhouse, will be wi' you, wi' a' the power we can make, in the snapping of a flint."

"Many thanks, Hobbie; but I hope we shall have no war of so unnatural and unchristian a kind in our time."

"Hout, sir, hout; it wad be but a wee bit neighbour war, and Heaven and earth would make allowances for it in this uncultivated place — it's just the nature o' the folk and the

land — we canna live quiet like London folk — we hae na sae muckle to do.”

“Well, Hobbie, for one who believes so deeply as you do in supernatural appearances, I must own you take Heaven in your own hand rather audaciously, considering where we are walking.”

“What needs I care for the Meiklestane Moor ony mair than ye do yoursel, Earnscliff? to be sure they say there’s a sort o’ worricows and lang-nebbit things about the land, but what need I care for them? I hae a good conscience, unless it be about a rant amang the lasses, or a splore at a fair, and that’s no muckle to speak of. Though I sae it mysel, I am as quiet a lad and as peaceable” —

“And Dick Turnbull’s head that you broke, and Willie of Winton whom you shot at?”

“Hout, Earnscliff, ye keep a record of a’ men’s misdoings — Dick’s head’s healed again, and we’re to fight out the quarrel at Jeddart, on the Rood-day, so that’s like a thing settled in a peaceable way; and then I am friends wi’ Willie again, poor chield — it was but twa or three haildraps after a’ — I wad let ony body do the like o’t to me for a pint o’ brandy. But Willie’s lowland bred, puir fallow, and soon frightened for himsel. — And, for the worricows, were we to meet ane on this very bit” —

“As is not unlikely,” said young Earnscliff, “for there stands your old witch, Hobbie.”

“I say,” continued Elliot, as if indignant at this hint — “I say, if the auld carline hersel was to get up out o’ the grund just before us here, I would think nae mair — but, gude preserve us, Earnscliff, what can yon be!”



CHAPTER III.

*Brown dwarf, that o'er the moorland strays,
Thy name to Keeldar tell!
"The Brown man of the Moor, that stays
Beneath the heather bell."*

JOHN LEYDEN.

THE object which alarmed the young farmer in the middle of his valorous protestations, startled for a moment even his less-prejudiced companion. The moon, which had arisen during their conversation, was, in the phrase of that country, wading or struggling with clouds, and shed only a doubtful and occasional light. By one of her beams, which streamed upon the great granite column, to which they now approached, they discovered a form, apparently human, but of a size much less than ordinary, which moved slowly among the large grey stones, not like a person intending to journey onward,

but with the slow, irregular, flitting movement of a being who hovers around some spot of melancholy recollection, uttering also, from time to time, a sort of indistinct muttering sound. This so much resembled his idea of the motions of an apparition, that Hobbie Elliot, making a dead pause, while his hair erected itself upon his scalp, whispered to his companion — “It’s auld Ailie, hersel! Shall I gi’e her a shot, in the name of God?”

“For Heaven’s sake, no,” said his companion, holding down the weapon which he was about to raise to the aim — “for Heaven’s sake, no; it’s some poor distracted creature.”

“You’re distracted yoursel, for thinking of going so near to her,” said Elliot, holding his companion, in his turn, as he prepared to advance. “We’ll aye hae time to pit ower a bit prayer (an’ I could but mind ane) before she comes this length — God! she’s in nae hurry,” continued he, growing bolder from his companion’s confidence, and the little notice the apparition seemed to take of them. “She hirples like a hen on a het girdle — I redd ye, Earnscliff,” [this he added in a gentle whisper,] “let us take a cast about, as if to draw the wind on a buck — the bog is no abune knee-deep, and better a saft road as bad company.”

Earnscliff, however, in spite of his companion's resistance and remonstrances, continued to advance on the path they had originally pursued, and soon confronted the object of their investigation.

The height of the object, which seemed even to decrease as they approached it, seemed to be under four feet, and its form, so far as the imperfect light afforded them the means of discerning, was very nearly as broad as long, or rather of a spherical shape, which could only be occasioned by some strange personal deformity. The young sportsman hailed this extraordinary appearance twice, without receiving any answer, or attending to the pinches by which his companion endeavoured to intimate, that their best course was to walk on, without giving farther disturbance to a being of such singular and preternatural exterior. To the third repeated demand of "Who are you? What do you here at this hour of night?" — a voice replied, whose shrill, uncouth, and dissonant tones made Elliot step two paces back, and startled even his companion, "Pass on your way, and ask nought at them that ask nought at you."

"What do you do here so far from shelter? Are you benighted on your journey? Will

you follow us home, ('God forbid,' ejaculated Hobbie Elliot, involuntarily,) and I will give you a lodging?"

"I would sooner lodge by mysel in the deepest of the Tarras-flow," again whispered Hobbie.

"Pass on your way," rejoined the figure, the harsh tones of his voice still more exalted by passion. "I want not your guidance — I want not your lodging — it is five years since my head was under a human roof, and I trust it was for the last time."

"He is mad," said Earnscliff.

"He has a look of auld Humphrey Ettercap, the tinkler, that perished in this very moss about five years syne," answered his superstitious companion; "but Humphrey was na that awfu' big in the bouk."

"Pass on your way," reiterated the object of their curiosity; "the breath of your human bodies poisons the air around me — the sound of your human voices goes through my ears like sharp bodkins."

"Lord safe us!" said Hobbie, "that the dead should bear sic fearfu' ill will to the living! — his saul maun be in a puir way, I'm jealous."

“Come, my friend,” said Earnscliff, “you seem to suffer under some strong affliction; common humanity will not allow us to leave you here.”

“Common humanity!” exclaimed the being, with a scornful laugh that sounded like a shriek, “where got ye that catchword — that noose for woodcocks — that common disguise for man-traps — that bait which the wretched idiot who swallows, will soon find covers a hook with barbs ten times sharper than those you lay for the animals which you murder for your luxury!”

“I tell you, my friend,” again replied Earnscliff, “you are incapable to judge of your own situation — you will perish in this wilderness, and we must, in compassion, force you along with us.”

“I’ll hae neither hand nor foot in’t,” said Hobbie; “let the ghaist take his ain way, for God’s sake.”

“My blood be on my own head, if I perish here,” said the figure; and, observing Earnscliff meditating to lay hold on him, he added, “and your blood be upon yours, if you touch but the skirt of my garments to infect me with the taint of mortality!”

The moon shone more brightly as he spoke thus, and Earnscliff observed that he held out his right hand armed with some weapon of offence, which glittered in the cold ray like the blade of a long knife, or the barrel of a pistol. It would have been madness to persevere in his attempt upon a being thus armed, and holding such desperate language, especially as it was plain he would have little aid from his companion, who had fairly left him to settle matters with the apparition as he could, and had proceeded a few paces on his way homeward. Earnscliff, therefore, turned and followed Hobbie, after looking back towards the supposed maniac, who, as if raised to frenzy by the interview, roamed wildly around the great stone, exhausting his voice in shrieks and imprecations that thrilled shrilly along the waste heath.

The two sportsmen moved on some time in silence, until they were out of hearing of these uncouth sounds, which was not ere they had gained a considerable distance from the pillar which gave name to the moor. Each made his private comments on the scene they had witnessed, until Hobbie Elliot suddenly exclaimed, "Weel, I'll uphaud that yon ghaist, if it be a ghaist, has baith done and suffered muckle evil in the flesh, that gars him rampauge in that way after he is dead and gane."

“It seems to me the very madness of misanthropy,” said Earnscliff, following his own current of thought.

“And ye didna think it was a spiritual creature, then?” asked Hobbie at his companion.

“Who, I? — No, surely.”

“Weel, I am partly of the mind mysel that it may be a live thing — and yet I dinna ken, I wadna wish to see ony thing look liker a bogle.”

“At any rate,” said Earnscliff, “I will ride over to-morrow, and see what has become of that unhappy being.”

“In fair day-light?” queried the yeoman, “then, grace o’ God, I’s be wi’ ye. But here we are nearer to Heugh-foot than to your house by twa miles, — hadna ye better e’en gae hame wi’ me, and we’ll send the callant on the powney to tell them that you are wi’ us, though I believe there’s naebody at hame to wait for you but the servants and the eat.”

“And as I would not willingly have either the servants be anxious, or puss forfeit her supper, in my absence, I’ll be obliged to you to send the boy as you propose.”

“Aweel, that is kind, I must say. And ye’ll gae hame to Heugh-foot? They’ll be right blithe to see you, that will they.”

This affair settled, they walked briskly on a little farther, when coming to the ridge of a pretty steep hill, Hobbie Elliot exclaimed, “Now, Earnscliff, I am aye glad when I come to this very bit — Ye see the light below, that’s in the ha’ window, where grannie, the gash auld carline, is sitting birling at her wheel — and ye see yon other light that’s gaun whid-ding back and forward through amang the windows? that’s my cousin, Grace Armstrong, — she’s twice as clever about the house as my sisters, and sae they say themselfs, for they’re good-natured lasses as ever trod on heather; but they confess themselfs, and sae does grannie, that she has far maist action, and is the best goer about the toun, now that grannie is off the foot hersel — My brothers, ane o’ them’s awa to wait upon the chamberlain, and ane’s at Mossphadraig, that’s our led farm — he can see after the stock as weel as I can do.”

“You are lucky, my good friend, in having so many valuable relations.”

“True am I — Grace make me thankful, I’ve never deny it. — But will ye tell me now,

Earnscliff, you that has been at college, and the high-school of Edinburgh, and got a' sort o' lair where it was to be best gotten — will ye tell me — no that it's ony concern of mine in particular, but I heard the priest of St John's, and our minister, bargaining about it at the Winter fair, and troth they baith spack very weel — Now, the priest says it's unlawful to marry ane's cousin; but I canna say I thought he brought out the Gospel authorities half sae weel as our minister — our minister is thought the best divine and the best preacher atween this and Edinburgh — Dinna ye think he was likely to be right?"

"Certainly marriage, by all protestant Christians, is held to be as free as God made it by the Levitical law; so, Hobbie, there can be no bar, legal or religious, betwixt you and Miss Armstrong."

"Hout awa wi' your joking, Earnscliff — ye are sae angry yoursel if ane touches you a bit, man, on the sooth side of the jest — No that I was asking the question about Grace, for ye maun ken she's no my cousin-germain out and out, but the daughter of my uncle's wife by her first marriage, so she's nae kith nor kin to me — only a connection like. — But now we're at the Sheeling-hill — I'll fire off my gun

to let them ken I'm coming, that's aye my way; and if I hae a deer I gie them twa shots, ane for the deer and ane for mysel."

He fired of his piece accordingly, and the number of lights were seen to traverse the house, and even to gleam before it. Hobbie Elliot pointed out one of these to Earnscliff, which seemed to glide from the house towards some of the out-houses — "That's Grace hersel," said Hobbie. "She'll no meet me at the door, I'se warrant her — but she'll be awa', for a' that, to see if my hounds' supper be ready, poor beasts."

"Love me, love my dog," answered Earnscliff. "Ah, Hobbie, you are a lucky young fellow."

This observation was uttered with something like a sigh, which apparently did not escape the ear of his companion.

"Hout, other folk may be as lucky as I am — O how I have seen Miss Isbel Vere's head turn after somebody when they passed ane anither at the Carlisle races! Wha kens how things may come round in this world?"

Earnscliff muttered something like an answer; but whether in assent of the proposition, or

rebuking the application of it, could not easily be discovered; and it seems probable that the speaker himself was willing his meaning should be in doubt and obscurity. They had now descended the broad steep loaning, which, winding round the foot of the steep bank, or heugh, brought them in front of the thatched, but comfortable, farm-house, which was the dwelling of Hobbie Elliot and his family.

The door-way was thronged with joyful faces; but the appearance of a stranger blunted many a jibe which had been prepared on Hobbie's lack of success in the deer-stalking. There was a little bustle among three handsome young women, each endeavouring to devolve upon another the task of ushering the stranger into the apartment, while probably all were anxious to escape to make some little personal arrangements before presenting themselves to a young gentleman in a dishabille only intended for their brother. Hobbie, in the meanwhile, bestowing some hearty and general abuse upon them all, (for Grace was not of the party,) snatched the candle from the hand of one of the rustic coquettes, as she stood playing pretty with it in her hand, and ushered his guest into the family parlour, or rather hall; for the place having been a house of defence in former times, the

sitting apartment was a vaulted and paved room, damp and dismal enough compared with the lodgings of the yeomanry of our days, but which, when well lighted up with a large sparkling fire of turf and bog-wood, seemed to Earnscliff a most comfortable exchange for the darkness and bleak blast of the hill. Kindly and repeatedly was he welcomed by the venerable old dame, the mistress of the family, who, dressed in her coif and pinnars, her close and decent gown of home-spun wool, but with a large gold necklace and ear-rings, looked, what she really was, the lady as well as the farmer's-wife, while, seated in her chair of wicker, by the corner of the great chimney, she directed the evening occupations of the young women, and of two or three stout serving wenches, who sate plying their distaffs behind the backs of their young mistresses.

As soon as Earnscliff had been duly welcomed, and hasty orders issued for some addition to the evening meal, his granddame and sisters opened their battery upon Hobbie Elliot for his lack of success against the deer.

"Jenny needna have kept up her kitchen fire for a' that Hobbie has brought hame," said one sister.

“Troth no, lass,” said another; “the gathering peat, if it was weel blawn, wad dress a’ our Hobbie’s venison.”

“Ay, or the low of the candle, if the wind wad let it bide steady,” said a third; “if I were him I would bring hame a black crow, rather than come back three times without a buck’s horn to blaw on.”

Hobbie turned from the one to the other, regarding them alternately with a frown on his brow, the augury of which was confuted by the good-humoured laugh on the lower part of his countenance. He then strove to propitiate them, by mentioning the intended present of his companion.

“In my young days,” said the old lady, “a man wad hae been ashamed to come back frae the hill without a buck hanging on each side o’ his horse, like a cadger carrying calves.”

“I wish they had left some for us then, grannie,” retorted Hobbie; “they’ve cleared the country o’ them, thae auld friends o’ yours, I’m thinking.”

“Ye see other folk can find game, though you cannot, Hobbie,” said the eldest sister, glancing a look at young Earnscliff.

“Weel, weel, woman, hasna every dog his day, begging Earnscliff’s pardon for the auld saying — Mayna I hae his luck; and he mine, another time? — It’s a braw thing for a man to be out a’ day, and frightened — na, I winna say that neither — but mistrysted wi’ bogles in the hame coming, and then to hae to flyte wi’ a wheen women that hae been doing naething a’ the live-lang day but whirling a bit stick, wi’ a thread trailing at it, or boring at a clout.”

“Frightened wi’ bogles!” exclaimed the females, one and all, for great was the regard then paid, and perhaps still paid, in these glens, to all such fantasies.

“I did not say frightened, now — I only said mis-set wi’ the thing — And there was but ae bogle, neither — Earnscliff, ye saw it as weel as I did?”

And he proceeded, without very much exaggeration, to detail, in his own way, the meeting they had with the mysterious being at Micklestone-Moor, concluding, he could not conjecture what on earth it could be, unless it was either the Enemy himsel, or some of the auld Peghts that held the country lang syne.

“Auld Peght!” exclaimed the grandame; “na, na — bless thee frae scathe, my bairn, it’s been

nae Peght that — it's been the Brown Man of the Moors! O weary fa' thae evil days! — what can evil beings be coming for to distract a poor country, now it's peacefully settled, and living in love and law? — O weary on him! he ne'er brought gude to these lands or the indwellers. My father often tauld me he was seen in the year o' the bloody fight at Marston-Moor, and then again in Montrose's troubles, and again before the rout o' Dunbar, and, in my ain time, he was seen about the time o' Bothwel-Brigg, and they said the second-sighted Laird of Benarbuck had a communing wi' him some time afore Argyle's landing, but that I cannot speak to sae preceesely — it was far in the west. — O, bairns, he's never permitted but in an ill time, sae mind ilka ane o' ye to draw to Him that can help in the day of trouble."

Earnscliff now interposed, and expressed his firm conviction that the person they had seen was some poor maniac, and had no commission from the invisible world to announce either war or evil. But his opinion found a very cold audience, and all joined to deprecate his purpose of returning to the spot the next day.

"O, my bonnie bairn," said the old dame, (for, in the kindness of her heart, she extended her parental style to all in whom she was in-

terested) — “You should beware mair than other folk — there’s been a heavy breach made in your house wi’ your father’s bloodshed, and wi’ law pleas, and losses sinsyne; and you are the flower of the flock, and the lad that will build up the auld bigging again (if it be His will) to be an honour to the country, and a safeguard to those that dwell in it — you, before others, are called upon to put yoursel in no rash adventures — for your’s way aye ower venturesome a race, and muckle harm they got by it.”

“But I am sure, my good friend, you would not have me be afraid of going to an open moor in broad day-light?”

“I dinna ken — I wad never bid son or friend o’ mine had their hand back in a gude cause, whether it were a friend’s o’r their ain — that should be by nae bidding of mine, or of ony body that’s come of a gentle kindred — But it winna gang out of a grey head like mine, that to gang to seek for evil that’s no fashing wi’ you, is clean against law and Scripture.”

Earnscliff resigned an argument which he saw no prospect of maintaining with good effect, and the entrance of supper broke off the conversation. Miss Grace had by this time made her appearance, and Hobbie, not without a

conscious glance at Earnscliff, placed himself by her side. Mirth and lively conversation, in which the old lady of the house took the good-humoured share which so well becomes old age, resorted to the cheeks of the damsels the roses which their brother's tale of the apparition had chased away, and they danced and sung for an hour after supper, as if there were no such things as goblins in the world.

CHAPTER IV.

*I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind;
For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,
That I might love thee something.*

Timon of Athens.

ON the morning, after breakfast, Earnscliff bid good-bie to his hospitable friends, promising to return in time to partake of the venison, which had arrived from his house. Hobbie, who apparently took leave of him at the door of his habitation, slunk out, however, and joined him at the top of the hill.

“Ye’ll be gaun yonder, Mr Patrick; feind o’ me will mistryst you for a’ my mother says. I thought it best to slip out quietly though, in case she should mislippen something of what we’re gaun to do — we manna vex her at nae rate. it was amaist the last word my father said to me on his death-bed.”

«By no means, Hobbie,” said Earnscliff; «she well merits all your attention.”

«Troth, for that matter, she would be as sair vexed amaisht for you as for me — but d’ye really think there’s nae presumption in venturing back yonder? — We hae nae special commission, ye ken?”

«If I thought as you do, Hobbie, I would not perhaps enquire farther into this business; but as I am of opinion that preternatural visitations are either ceased altogether, or become very rare in our days, I am unwilling to leave a matter uninvestigated which may concern the life of a poor distracted being.”

«Aweel, aweel, if ye really think that,” answered Hobbie doubtfully — «And it’s for certain the very fairies — I mean the very good neighbours themsells (for they say folk suldna ca’ them fairies) that used to be seen on every green knowe at e’en, are no half sae often visible in our days. I canna depone to having ever seen ane mysel, but I ance heard ane whistle ahint me in the moss, as like a whaup as ae thing could be like anither. And mony ane my father saw when he used to come hame frae the fairs at e’en, wi’ a drap drink in his head, honest man.”

Earnscliff was somewhat entertained with the gradual declension of superstition from one generation to another, which was inferred in this last observation; and they continued to reason on such subjects, until they came in sight of the upright stone which gave name to the moor.

“As I shall answer,” says Hobie, “yonder’s the creature creeping about yet! — But it’s day-light, and you have your gun, and I brought out my bit whinger — I think we may venture on him.”

“By all manner of means,” said Earnscliff; “but, in the name of wonder, what can he be doing there?”

“Biggin a dry-stane dyke, I think, wi’ the grey geese, as they ca’ thae great loose stanes — Odd, that passes a’ thing I e’er heard tell o’.”

As they approached nearer, Earnscliff could not help agreeing with his companion. The figure they had seen the night before seemed slowly and toilsomely labouring to pile the large stones one upon another, as if to form a small inclosure. Materials lay around him in great plenty, but the labour of carrying on the work was immense, from the size of most of the

stones; and it seemed astonishing that he should have succeeded in moving several which he had already arranged for the foundation of his edifice. He was struggling to move a fragment of great size, when the two young men came up, and was so intent upon executing his purpose, that he did not perceive them till they were close upon him. In straining and heaving at the stone, in order to place it according to his wish, he displayed a degree of strength which seemed utterly inconsistent with his size and apparent deformity. Indeed, to judge from the difficulties he had already surmounted, he must have been of Herculean powers; for some of the stones he had succeeded in raising must apparently have required two men's strength to move them. Hobbie's suspicions began to revive, on seeing the preternatural strength he exerted.

"I am amaist persuaded it's the ghaist of a stane-mason — see siccan band-stanes as he's laid — An' it be a man, after a', I wonder what he wad take by the rood to build a march-dyke. There's ane sair wanted between Cringlehope and the Shaws. — Honest man, (raising his voice,) ye make good firm wark there."

The being whom he addressed raised his eyes with a ghastly stare, and getting up from his stooping posture, stood before them in all his

native deformity. His head was of uncommon size, covered with a fell of shaggy hair, partly grizzled with age; his eye-brows, shaggy and prominent, overhung a pair of small, dark, piercing eyes, set far back in their sockets, that rolled with a portentous wildness, indicative of a partial insanity. The rest of his features were of the coarse, rough-hewn stamp with which a painter would equip a giant in a romance, to which was added, the wild, irregular, and peculiar expression so often seen in the countenances of those whose persons are deformed. His body, thick and square, like that of a man of middle size, was mounted upon two large feet; but nature seemed to have forgotten the legs and the thighs, or they were so very short as to be hidden by the dress which he wore. His arms were long and brawny, furnished with two muscular hands, and where uncovered in the eagerness of his labour, were shagged with coarse black hair. It seemed as if nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant, but had afterwards capriciously assigned them to the person of a dwarf, so ill did the length of his arms, and the iron strength of his frame, correspond with the shortness of his stature. His cloathing was a sort of coarse brown tunic, like a monk's frock, girt round him with a

belt of seal-skin. On his head he had a cap made of badger's skin, or some other rough fur, which added considerably to the grotesque effect of his whole appearance, and overshadowed features, whose habitual expression seemed that of sullen malignant misanthropy. This remarkable Dwarf gazed on the two youths in silence, with a dogged and irritated look, until Earnscliff, willing to sooth him into better temper, observed — „You are hard tasked, my friend; allow us to assist you.”

Elliot and he accordingly placed the stone, by their joint efforts, upon the rising wall. The Dwarf watched them with the eye of a taskmaster, and testified, by peevish gestures, his impatience at the time which they took in adjusting the stone. He pointed to another — they raised it also — to a third, to a fourth — they continued to humour him, though with some trouble, for he assigned them, as if intentionally, the heaviest fragments which lay near.

„And now, friend,” said Elliot, as the unreasonable Dwarf indicated another stone larger than any they had moved, „Earnscliff may do as he likes; but be ye man, or be ye waur, de'il be in my fingers if I break my back wi' heaving these stanes ony langer like a barrow-

man, without getting sae muckle as thanks for my pains."

"Thanks!" exclaimed the Dwarf, with a motion expressive of the utmost contempt — "There — take them, and fatten upon them! Take them, and may they thrive with you as they have done with me — as they have done with every mortal worm that ever heard the word spoken by his fellow reptile! — Hence — either labour or begone."

"This is a fine reward we have, Earnscliff, for building a tabernacle for the devil, and prejudicing our ain souls into the bargain, for what we ken."

"Our presence," answered Earnscliff, "seems only to irritate his frenzy; we had better leave him, and send some one to provide him with food and necessaries."

They did so. The servant dispatched for this purpose found the Dwarf still labouring at his wall, but could not extract a word from him. The lad, infected with the superstitions of the country, did not long persist in an attempt to intrude questions or advice on so singular a figure, but having placed the articles which he had brought for his use on a stone at some

distance, he left them at the misanthrope's disposal.

The Dwarf proceeded in his labours, day after day, with an assiduity so incredible as to appear almost supernatural. In one day he often seemed to have done the work of two men, and his building soon assumed the appearance of the walls of a hut, which, though very small, and constructed only of stones and turf, without any mortar, assumed, from the unusual size of the stones employed, an appearance of solidity very uncommon for a cottage of such narrow dimensions and rude construction. Earnscliff, attentive to his motions, no sooner perceived to what they tended, than he sent down a number of spars of wood suitable for forming the roof, which he caused to be left in the neighbourhood of the spot, resolving next day to send workmen to put them up. But his purpose was anticipated, for in the evening, during, the night, and early in the morning, the Dwarf had laboured so hard and with such ingenuity, that he had nearly completed the adjustment of the rafters. His next labour was to cut rushes and thatch his dwelling, a task which he performed with singular dexterity.

As he seemed averse to receive any aid beyond the occasional assistance of a passenger, mate-

rials suitable to his purpose, and tools, were supplied to him, in the use of which he proved to be skilful. He constructed the door and window of his cot, he adjusted a rude bedstead, and a few shelves, and appeared to become somewhat soothed in his temper as his accommodations increased.

His next task was to form a strong inclosure, and to labour the land within it to the best of his power, until, by transporting mould, and working up what was upon the spot, he formed a patch of garden-ground. It must be naturally supposed, that, as above hinted, this solitary being received assistance occasionally from such travellers as crossed the moor by chance, as well as from several who went from curiosity to visit his works. It was, indeed, impossible to see a human being, so unfitted, at first sight, for hard labour, toiling with such unremitting assiduity, without stopping a few minutes to aid him in his task; and, as no one of his occasional assistants was acquainted with the degree of help which the Dwarf had received from others, the celerity of his progress lost none of its marvels in their eyes. The strong and compact appearance of the cottage, formed in so very short a space, and by such a being, and the superior skill which he displayed in

mechanics, and in other arts, gave suspicion to the surrounding neighbours. They insisted, that, if he was not a phantom, — an opinion which was now abandoned, since he had plainly appeared a being of blood and bone with themselves, — yet he must be in close league with the invisible world, and have chosen that sequestered spot to carry on his communication with them undisturbed. They insisted, though in a different sense from the philosopher's application of the phrase, that he was never less alone than when alone; and that from the heights which commanded the moor at a distance, passengers often discovered a person at work along with this dweller of the desert, who regularly disappeared as soon as they approached closer to the cottage. Such a figure was also occasionally seen sitting beside him at the door, walking with him in the moor, or assisting him in fetching water from his fountain. Earnscliff explained this phaenomenon by supposing it to be the Dwarf's shadow. — „De'il a shadow has he,” replied Hobbie Elliot, who was a strenuous defender of the general opinion; „he's ower far in wi' the Auld Ane to hae a shadow. Besides”, he argued more logically, „whae'er heard of a shadow that cam between a body and the sun? and this thing, be it what it will, is bigger and taller than the body himsel, and has been

seen to come between him and the sun mair than anes or twice either."

These suspicions, which in any other part of the country, might have been attended with investigations a little inconvenient to the supposed wizard, were here only productive of respect and awe. The recluse being seemed somewhat gratified by the marks of timid veneration with which an occasional passenger approached his dwelling, the look of startled surprise with which he surveyed his person and his premises, and the hurried step with which he pressed his retreat as he passed the awful spot. The boldest only stopped to gratify their curiosity by a hasty glance at the walls of his cottage and garden, and to apologize for it by a courteous salutation, which the inhabitant sometimes deigned to return by a word or a nod. Earnscliff often passed that way, and seldom without enquiring after the solitary inmate, who seemed now to have arranged his establishment for life.

It was impossible to engage him in any conversation on his own personal affairs; nor was he communicative or accessible in talking on any other subject whatever, although he seemed to have considerably relented in the extreme ferocity of his misanthropy, or rather to be less frequently visited with the fits of derangement

of which this was a symptom. No argument could prevail upon him to accept any thing beyond the simplest necessities, although much more was offered, by Earnscliff out of charity, and by his more superstitious neighbours, from other motives. The benefits of these last he repaid by advice, when consulted (as at length he slowly was) on their diseases, or those of their cattle. He often furnished them with medicines also, and seemed possessed, not only of such as were the produce of the country, but of foreign drugs. He gave these persons to understand that his name was Elshender the Recluse; but his popular epithet soon came to be Canny Elshie, or the Wise Wight of Mucklestane Moor. Some extended their queries beyond their bodily complaints, and requested advice upon other matters, which he delivered with an oracular shrewdness that greatly confirmed the opinion of his possessing preternatural skill. The querists usually left some offering upon a stone, at a distance from his dwelling; if it was money, or any article which did not suit him to accept, he either threw it away, or suffered it to remain where it was left without making use of it. On all these occasions his manners were rude and unsocial; and his words, in number, just sufficient to express his meaning as briefly as possible, and

he shunned all communication that went a word beyond the matter in hand. When winter had passed away, and his garden began to afford him herbs and vegetables, he confined himself almost entirely to those articles of food. He accepted, notwithstanding, a pair of she goats from Earnscliff, which fed on the moor, and supplied him with milk.

When Earnscliff found his gift had been received, he soon afterwards paid the hermit a visit. The old man was seated on a broad flat stone near his garden-door, which was the seat of science he usually occupied, when disposed to receive his patients or clients. The inside of his hut, and that of his garden, he kept as sacred from human intrusion as the natives of Otaheite do their Morai; — apparently he would have deemed it polluted by the step of any human being. When he shut himself up in his habitation, no entreaty could prevail upon him to make himself visible, or to give audience to any one whomsoever.

Earnscliff had been fishing in a small river at some distance. He had his rod in his hand, and his basket, with his trouts, at his shoulder. He sat down upon a stone nearly opposite to the Dwarf, who, familiarized with his presence, took no farther notice of him than by elevating

his huge mis-shapen head for the purpose of staring at him, and then again sinking it upon his bosom, as if in profound meditation. Earnscliff looked around him, and observed that the hermit had increased his accommodations by the construction of a shed for the reception of his goats.

„You labour hard, Elshie,” said he, willing to lead this singular being into conversation.

„Labour,” re-echoed the Dwarf, „is the mildest evil of a lot so miserable as that of mankind; better to labour like me, than sport like you.”

„I cannot defend the humanity of our ordinary rural sports, Elshie, and yet” —

„And yet,” interrupted the Dwarf, „they are better than your ordinary business; better to exercise idle and wanton cruelty on mute fishes than on your fellow-creatures. Yet why should I say so? Why should not the whole human herd butt, gore, and gorge upon each other, till all are extirpated but one huge and overfed Behemoth, and he, when he had throttled and gnawed the bones of all his fellows — he, when his prey failed him, to be roaring whole days for lack of food, and, finally, to die inch

by inch of famine — it were a consummation worthy of the race!”

„Your deeds are better, Elshie, than your words,” answered Earnscliff; „you labour to preserve the race whom your misanthropy slanders.”

I do; but why? — Hearken. You are one on whom I look with the least loathing, and I care not, if, contrary to my wont, I waste a few words in compassion to your infatuated blindness. If I cannot send disease into families, and murrain among the herds, can I attain the same end so well as by prolonging the lives of those who can serve the purpose of destruction as effectually? — If Alice of Bower had died in winter, would young Ruthwin have been slain for her love the last spring? — Who thought of penning their cattle beneath the tower when the Red Reiver of Westburnflat was deemed to be on his death-bed? — My draughts, my skill recovered him; and, now, who dare leave his herd upon the lea without a watch, or go to bed without unchaining the sleuth-hound?”

„I own,” answered Earnscliff, „you did little good to society by the last of these cures. But, to balance the evil, there is my friend Hobbie honest Hobbie of the Heugh-foot, your skill

relieved him last winter in a fever that might have cost him his life."

"Thus think the children of clay in their ignorance," said the Dwarf, smiling maliciously, "and thus they speak in their folly. Have you marked the young cub of a wild-cat that has been domesticated, how sportive, how gamesome how gentle, — but trust him with your game, your lambs, your poultry, his inbred ferocity breaks forth; he gripes, tears, ravages, and devours."

Such is the animal's instinct," answered Earnscliff; "but what has that to do with Hobbie?"

It is his emblem — it is his picture," rejoined the Recluse. "He is at present tame, quiet, and domesticated, for lack of opportunity to exercise his inborn propensities; but let the trumpet of war sound — let the young blood-hound snuff blood, he will be as ferocious as the wildest of his Border ancestors that ever fired a helpless peasant's abode. Can you deny, that even at present he often urges you to take bloody revenge for an injury received when you were a boy?" — Earnscliff started; the Recluse appeared not to observe his surprise, and proceeded, — "The trumpet *will* blow, the young

blood hound *will* lap blood, and I will laugh and say, „For this I have preserved thee!“ He paused, and continued, — „Such are my cures; — their object — their purpose, perpetuating the mass of misery, and playing even in this desert my part in the general tragedy. Were *you* on your sick-bed, I might, in compassion, send you a cup of poison.“

„I am much obliged to you, Elshie, and certainly shall not fail to consult you with so comfortable a hope from your assistance.“

„Do not flatter yourself too far,“ replied the Hermit, „with the hope that I will positively yield to the frailty of pity. Why should I snatch a dupe, so well fitted to endure the miseries of life as you are; from the wretchedness which his own visions, and the villainy of the world, are preparing for him? — Why should I play the compassionate Indian, and, knocking out the brains of the captive with my tomahawk, at once spoil the three days' amusement of my kindred tribe, at the very moment when the brands were lighted, the pincers heated, the cauldrons boiling, the knives sharpened, to tear, scorch, seethe, and scarify the intended victim?“

„A dreadful picture you present to me of life, Elshie, but I am not daunted by it,“ re-

turned Earnscliff. „We are sent here in one sense to bear and to suffer, but in another to do and to enjoy. The active day has its evening of repose; even patient sufferance has its alleviation, where there is a consolatory sense of duty discharged.”

„I spurn at the slavish and bestial doctrine,” said the Dwarf, his eyes kindling with insane fury, — „spurn at it as worthy only of the beasts that perish; but I will waste no more words with you.”

He rose hastily; but, ere he withdrew into the hut, he added, with great vehemence, „Yet, lest you still think my apparent benefits to mankind flow from the stupid and servile source, called love of our fellow-creatures, know, that, were there a man who had annihilated my soul's dearest hope — who had torn my heart to mammoicks, and seared my brain till it glowed like a volcano, and were that man's fortune and life in my power as completely as this frail pot-sherd,” (he snatched up an earthen cup which stood beside him,) „I would not dash him into atoms thus — ” (he flung the vessel with fury against the wall.) „No!” (he spoke more composedly, but with the utmost bitterness,) „I would pamper him with wealth and power to influence his evil passions, and

to fulfil his evil designs; he should lack no means of vice and villainy; he should be the centre of a whirlpool that itself should know neither rest nor peace, but boil with unceasing fury, while it wrecked every goodly ship that approached its limits! he should be an earthquake capable of shaking the very land in which he dwelt, and rendering all its inhabitants friendless, outcast, and miserable, as I am!"

The wretched being rushed into his hut as he uttered these last words, shutting the door with furious violence, and rapidly drawing two bolts, one after another, as if to exclude the intrusion of any one of that hated race, who had thus lashed his soul to frenzy. Earnscliff left the moor with a mingling sensation of pity and horror, pondering what strange and melancholy cause could have reduced to so miserable a state of mind, a man whose language argued him to be of rank and education much superior to the vulgar. He was also surprised to see how much particular information a person who had lived in that country so short a time, and in so recluse a manner, had been able to collect respecting the dispositions and private affairs of the inhabitants.

“It is no wonder,” he said to himself, “that with such extent of information, such a mode of life, so uncouth a figure, and sentiments so virulently, misanthropic, this unfortunate should be regarded by the vulgar as in league with the enemy of mankind.”

The wretched being rushed into his hut as he uttered these last words, shutting the door with furious violence, and drawing two bolts, one after another, so as to exclude the intrusion of any one who dared tread upon his threshold. He seated himself in his room with a mingling sensation of pity and horror, pondering what strange and morbid thoughts could have reduced to so vile a state a man whose education would have raised him to the level of rank and education much superior to the vulgar. He was also surprised to see how much particular information he possessed who had lived in that country as short a time, and in so remote a corner, had been able to collect respecting the dispositions and private affairs of the inhabitants.

CHAPTER V.

*The bleakest rock upon the loneliest heath
Feels, in its barrenness, some touch of spring;
And, in the April dew, or beam of May,
Its moss and lichen freshen and revive;
And thus the heart, most seared to human pleasure,
Melts at the tear, joys in the smile of woman.*

BEAUMONT.

As the season advanced the weather became more genial, and the Recluse was more frequently found occupying the broad flat stone in the front of his mansion. As he sate there one day, about the hour of noon, a party of gentlemen and ladies, well mounted, and numerous attended, swept across the heath at some distance from his dwelling. Dogs, hawks, and led-horses, swelled the retinue, and the air resounded at intervals with the cheer of the

hunters, and the sound of horns blown by the attendants. The Recluse was about to retire into his mansion at the sight of a train so joyous, when three young ladies, with their attendants, who had made a circuit, and detached themselves from their party, in order to gratify their curiosity by a sight of the Wise Wight of Mucklestane-Moor, came suddenly up ere he could effect his purpose. The first shrieked, and put her hands before her eyes, at sight of an object so unusually deformed. The second, with a hysterical giggle, which she intended should disguise her terrors, asked the Recluse, whether he could tell their fortune. The third, who was best mounted, best dressed, and incomparably the best-looking of the three, advanced, as if to cover the incivility of her companions.

“We have lost the right path that leads through these morasses, and our party have gone forward without us,” said the young lady. “Seeing you, father, at the door of your house, we have turned this way to” —

“Hush!” interrupted the Dwarf; “so young and already so artful? You came — you know you came, to exult in the consciousness of your own youth, wealth, and beauty, by contrasting them with age, poverty, and deformity. It is

a fit employment for the daughter of your father, but O how unlike the child of your mother!"

"Did you, then, know my parents, and do you know me?"

"Yes; this is the first time you have crossed my waking eyes, but I have seen you in my dreams."

"Your dreams?"

"Ay, Isabel Vere. What hast thou, or thine, to do with my waking thoughts?"

"Your waking thoughts, sir," said the second of Miss Vere's companions, with a sort of mock gravity, "are fixed, doubtless, upon wisdom; folly can only intrude on your sleeping moments."

"Over thine," retorted the Dwarf, more spleenetically than became a philosopher, or hermit, "folly exercises an unlimited empire, asleep or wake."

"Lord bless us!" said the lady, "he's a prophet, sure enough."

"As surely," continued the Recluse, "as thou art a woman — a woman! — I should have said a lady — a fine lady. You asked me to tell your fortune — it is a simple one; an endless chase through life after follies not worth

catching, and, when caught, successively thrown away — a chase, pursued from the days of tottering infancy to those of old age upon his crutches. Toys and merry-makings in childhood — love and its absurdities in youth — spadille and basto in age, shall succeed each other as objects of pursuit — flowers and butterflies in spring — butterflies and thistledown in summer — withered leaves in autumn and winter — all pursued, all caught, all flung aside. — Stand apart; your fortune is said."

"All *caught*, however," retorted the laughing fair one, who was a cousin of Miss Vere's; "that's something, Nanny," she continued, turning to the timid damsel who had first approached the Dwarf; "will you ask your fortune?"

"Not for worlds," said she, drawing back, "I have heard enough of yours."

"Well, then," said Miss Ilderton, offering money to the Dwarf, "I'll pay for mine, as if it were spoken by an oracle to a princess."

"Truth," said the Soothsayer, "can neither be bought nor sold," and he pushed back her proffered offering with morose disdain.

"Well, then," said the lady, "I'll keep my money, Mr Elshender, to assist me in the chase I am to pursue."

“You will need it,” replied the cynic; “without it, few pursue successfully, and fewer are themselves pursued. — Stop!” he said to Miss Vere, as her companions moved off, “with you I have more to say. You have what your companions would wish to have, or to be thought to have, — beauty, wealth, station, accomplishments.”

“Forgive my following my companions, father; I am proof both to flattery and fortune-telling.”

“Stay,” continued the Dwarf, with his hand on her horse’s rein, “I am no common sooth-sayer, and I am no flatterer. All the advantages I have detailed, all and each of them have their corresponding evils — unsuccessful love, crossed affections, the gloom of a convent, or an odious alliance. I, who wish ill to all mankind, cannot wish more evil to you, so much is your course of life already crossed by it.”

“And if it be, father, let me enjoy the readiest solace of adversity while prosperity is in my power. You are old; you are poor; your habitation is far from human aid, were you ill or in want; your situation, in many respects, exposes you to the suspicions of the vulgar,

which are too apt to break out into actions of brutality. Let me think I have mended the lot of one human being; accept of such assistance as I have power to offer; do this for my sake, if not for your own, that when these evils arise, which you prophesy perhaps too truly, I may not have to reflect, that the hours of my happier time have been passed altogether in vain."

The old man answered with a broken voice, and almost without addressing himself to the young lady.

"Yes, 'tis thus thou should'st think — 'tis thus thou should'st speak, if ever human speech and thought kept touch with each other! They do not — they do not — Alas! they cannot. And yet — wait here an instant — stir not till my return." He went to his little garden, and returned with a half-blown rose. "Thou hast made me shed a tear, the first which has wet my eye-lids for many a year; for that good deed receive this token of gratitude. It is but a common rose; preserve it, however, and do not part with it. Come to me in your hour of adversity. Show me that rose, or but one leaf of it, were it withered as my heart is — if it should be in my fiercest and wildest movements of rage against a hateful world, still it will recal gentler thoughts to my bosom, and perhaps

afford happier prospects to thine. But no message," he exclaimed, rising into his usual mood of misanthropy, — „no message — no go-between! Come thyself; and the heart and the doors that are shut against every other earthly being, shall open to thee and to thy sorrows. And now, pass on."

He let go the bridle-rein, and the young lady rode on, after expressing her thanks to this singular being, as well as her surprise at the extraordinary nature of his address would permit, often turning back to look at the Dwarf, who still remained at the door of his habitation, and watched her progress over the moor towards her father's castle of Ellieslaw, until the brow of the hill hid them from his sight.

The ladies, mean time, jested with Miss Vere on the strange interview they had just had with the far-famed Wizard of the Moor. „Isabella has all the luck at home and abroad; her hawk strikes down the black-cock; her eyes wound the gallant; no chance for her poor companions and kinswomen; even the conjurer cannot escape the force of her charms. You should, in compassion, cease to be such an engrosser. my dear Isabel, or at least set up shop and sell off all the goods you do not mean to keep for your own use."

„You shall have them all,” replied Miss Vere, „and the conjurer to boot, at a very easy rate.”

„No! Nancy shall have the conjuror,” said Miss Ilderton, „to supply deficiencies; she’s not quite a witch herself, you know.”

„Lord, sister,” answered the younger Miss Ilderton, „what could I do with so frightful a monster? I kept my eyes shut after once glancing at him; and, I protest, I thought I saw him still, though I winked as close as ever I could.”

„That’s a pity,” said her sister; „ever while you live, Nanny, chuse an admirer whose faults can be hid by winking at them. — Well, then, I must take him myself, I suppose, and put him into mamma’s Japan cabinet, in order to shew that Scotland can produce a specimen of mortal clay, moulded into a form ten thousand times uglier than the imaginations of Canton and Pekin, fertile as they are in monsters, have immortalized in porcelain.”

„There is something,” said Miss Vere, „so melancholy in the situation of this poor man, that I cannot enter into your mirth, Lucy, so readily as usual. If he has no resources, how is he to exist in this waste country, living, as he does, at such a distance from mankind?”

and, if he has the means of securing occasional assistance, will not the very suspicion that he is possessed of them, expose him to plunder and assassination by some of our unsettled neighbours?"

"But you forget that they say he is a warlock," said Nancy Ilderton.

"And, if his magic diabolical should fail him," rejoined her sister, "I would have him trust to his magic natural, and thrust his enormous head, and most preternatural visage, out at his door or window, full in view of the assailants. The boldest robber that ever rode would hardly bide a second glance of him. Well, I wish I had the use of that Gorgon head of his only one half hour."

"For what purpose, Lucy?" said Miss Vere.

"O! I would frighten out of the castle that dark, stiff, and stately Sir Frederick Langley, that is so great a favourite with your father, and so little a favourite of your's. I protest I shall be obliged to the Wizard as long as I live, if it were only for the half hour's relief from that man's company which we have gained by deviating from the party to visit Elshie."

"What would you say, then," said Miss Vere, in a low tone, so as not to be heard by the

younger sister, who rode before them, the narrow path not admitting of their moving all three abreast; „what would you say, my dearest Lucy, if it were proposed to you to endure his company for life?”

„Say? I would say, *No, no, no*, three times, each louder than another, till they should hear me at Carlisle.”

„And Sir Frederick would say then, nineteen nay-says are half a grant.”

„That,” replied Miss Lucy, „depends entirely on the manner in which the naysays are said. Mine should have no one grain of concession in them, I promise you.”

„But if your father,” said Miss Vere, „were to say, — Thus do, or” —

„I would stand to the consequences of his or, were he the most cruel father that ever was recorded in romance, to fill up the alternative.”

„And what if he threatened you with a catholic aunt, an abbess, and a cloister?”

„Then,” said Miss Ilderton, „I would threaten him with a protestant son-in-law, and be glad of an opportunity to disobey him for conscience sake. And now that Nanny is out of hearing,

let me really say, I think you would be excusable before God and man for resisting this preposterous match by every means in your power. A proud, dark, ambitious man; a caballer against the state; infamous for his avarice and severity; a bad son, a bad brother, unkind and ungenerous to all his relatives — Isabel, I would die rather than have him."

"Don't let my father hear you give me such advice," said Miss Vere, "or adieu to Ellieslaw-Castle."

"And adieu to Ellieslaw-Castle, with all my heart," said Lucy, "if I once saw you fairly out of it, and settled under some kinder protector than he whom nature has given you. O, if my poor father had been in his former health, how gladly would he have received and sheltered you, till this ridiculous and cruel persecution were blown over!"

"Would to God it had been so, my dear Lucy," answered her friend; "but I fear, that, in your father's weak state of health, he would be altogether unable to protect me against the means which would be immediately used for reclaiming the poor fugitive."

"I fear so, indeed," replied Miss Ilderton, "but we will consider and devise something."

Now that your father and his guests seem so deeply engaged in some mysterious plot, to judge from the passing and returning of messages, from the strange faces which appear and disappear without being announced by their names, from the collecting and cleaning of arms, and the anxious gloom and bustle which seem to agitate every male in the castle, it may not be impossible for us (always in case matters be driven to extremity) to shape out some little supplemental conspiracy of our own. I hope the gentlemen have not kept all the policy to themselves; and there is one associate that I would gladly admit to your counsel."

"Not Nanny?"

"O, no!" said Miss Ilderton; "Nancy, though an excellent good girl, and fondly attached to you, would make a dull conspirator — as dull as Renault and all the other subordinate plotters in Venice Preserved. No; this is a Jaffier, or Pierre, if you like the character better; and yet, though I know I shall please you, I am afraid to mention his name to you lest I vex you at the same time. Can you not guess? Something about an eagle and a rock; it does not begin with eagle in English, but something very like it in Scotch."

“You cannot mean young Earnscliff, Lucy?” said Miss Vere, blushing deeply.

“And whom else should I mean?” said Lucy. “Jaffiers and Pierres are very scarce in this country, I take it, though one could find Renaults and Bedamars enow.”

“How can you talk so wildly, Lucy? Your plays and romances have positively turned your brain. You know, that, independent of my father’s consent, without which I never will marry any one, and which, in the case you point at, would never be granted; independent, too, of our knowing nothing of young Earnscliff’s inclinations, but by your own wild conjectures and fancies — besides all this, there is the fatal brawl!”

“When his father was killed?” said Lucy. “But that was very long ago; and I hope we have outlived the time of bloody feud, when a quarrel was carried down between two families from father to son, like a Spanish game at chess, and a murder or two committed in every generation just to keep the matter from going to sleep. We do with our quarrels now-a-days as with our clothes; cut them out for ourselves, and wear them out in our own day, and should no more think of resenting our fathers’ feuds,

than of wearing their slashed doublets and trunk-hose."

"You treat this far too lightly, Lucy," answered Miss Vere.

"Not a bit, my dear Isabella," said Lucy. "Consider your father, though present in the unhappy affray, is never supposed to have struck the fatal blow; besides, in former times, in case of mutual slaughter between clans, subsequent alliances were so far from being excluded, that the hand of a daughter, or a sister, was the most frequent gage of reconciliation. You laugh at my skill in romance; but, I assure you, should your history be written, like that of many a less distressed and less deserving heroine, the well-judging reader would set you down for the lady and the love of Earnscliff, from the very obstacle which you suppose so insurmountable."

"But these are not the days of romance, but of sad reality, for there stands the castle of Ellieslaw."

"And there stands Sir Frederick Langley at the gate, waiting to assist the ladies from their palfreys. I would as lief touch a toad; I will disappoint him, and take old Horsington the groom for my master of the horse."

So saying, the lively young lady switched her palfrey forward, and passing Sir Frederick with a familiar nod as he stood ready to take her horse's rein, she cantered forward and jumped into the arms of the old groom. Fain would Isabella have done the same had she dared; but her father stood near, displeasure already darkening on a countenance peculiarly qualified to express the harsher passions, and she was compelled to receive the unwelcome assiduities of her detested suitor.

CHAPTER VI.

*Let not us that are squires of the night's body
be called thieves of the days beauty: let us
be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade,
minions of the moon.*

Henry the Fourth, Part I.

THE Solitary had consumed the remainder of that day in which he had the interview with the young ladies, within the precincts of his garden. Evening again found him seated on his favourite stone. The sun setting red, and among seas of rolling clouds, threw a gloomy lustre over the moor, and gave a deeper purple to the broad outline of heathy mountains which surrounded this desolate spot. The Dwarf sate watching the clouds as they lowered above each other in masses of conglomerated vapours, and, as a strong lurid beam of the sinking luminary darted full on his solitary and uncouth figure, he might

well have seemed the demon of the storm which was gathering, or some gnome summoned forth from the recesses of the earth by the subterranean signals of its approach. As he sate thus, with his dark eye turned toward the scowling and blackening heaven, a horseman rode rapidly towards him, and stopping, as if to let his horse breathe for an instant, made a sort of obeisance to the anchoret, with an air betwixt effrontery and embarrassment.

The figure of the rider was thin, tall, and slender, but remarkably athletic, bony, and sinewy; like one who had all his life followed those violent exercises which prevent the human form from increasing in bulk, while they harden and confirm by habit its muscular powers. His face, thin, sunburnt, and freckled, had a sinister expression of violence, impudence, and cunning, each of which seemed alternately to predominate over the others. Sandy-coloured hair, and reddish eyebrows, from under which looked forth his sharp grey eyes, completed the inauspicious outline of the horseman's physiognomy. He had pistols in his holsters, and another pair peeped from his belt, though he had taken some pains to conceal them by buttoning his doublet. He wore a rusted steel headpiece, a buff jacket of rather an antique cast, gloves,

of which that for the right hand was covered with small scales of iron, like an ancient gauntlet; and a long broadsword completed his equipage.

“So,” said the Dwarf, “rapine and murder once more on horseback.”

“On horseback?” said the bandit; “ay, ay, Elshie, your leech-craft has set me on the bonny bay again.”

“And all those promises of amendment which you made during your illness, forgotten?” continued Elshender.

“All clear away with the water-saps and panada,” returned the unabashed convalescent. “Ye ken, Elshie, for they say ye are weel acquainted with the gentleman,

‘When the devil was sick, the devil a monk
would be,

When the devil was well, the devil a monk
was he.’”

“Thou say’st true,” said the Solitary; “as well divide a wolf from his appetite for carnage, or a raven from her scent of slaughter, as thee from thy accursed propensities.”

“Why, what would you have me to do? — It’s born with me — lies in my very blude and bane. Why, man, the lads of Westburnflat, for ten lang descents, have been reivers and lifters. They have all drunk hard, lived high, taken deep revenge for light offence, and never wanted gear for the winning.”

“Right; and thou art as thorough bred a wolf,” said the Dwarf, “as ever leaped a lamb-fold at night. On what hell’s errand art thou bound now?”

“Can your skill not guess?”

“Thus far I know,” said the Dwarf, “that thy purpose is bad, thy deed will be worse, and the issue worst of all.”

“And you like me the better for it, eh?” said Westburnflat; “you always said you did.”

“I have cause to like all,” said the Solitary, “that are scourges to their fellow-creatures, and thou art a bloody one.”

“No — I say not guilty to that — never bluidy unless there’s resistance, and that sets a man’s bluid up, ye ken. — And this is nae great matter, after a’; just to cut the kame of a young cock that has been crawling a little ower crouselly.”

“Not young Earnscliff?” said the Solitary, with some emotion.

“No; not young Earnscliff — no young Earnscliff *yet*; but his time may come, if he will not take warning, and get him back to the burrow-town that he’s fit for, and no keep skelping about here, destroying the few deer that are left in the country, and pretending to act as a magistrate, and writing letters to the great folks at Auld Reekie about the disturbed state of the land. Let him take care o’ himsel!”

“Then it must be Hobbie of the Heughfoot. What harm has the lad done you?”

“Harm? nae great harm; but I hear he says I staid away from the Ba’-spiel on Fastern’s E’en, for fear of him; and it was only for fear of the Country Keeper, for there was a warrant against me. I’ll stand Hobbie’s feud, and a’ his clan’s. But it’s no so much for that, as to gi’e him a lesson no to let his tongue gallop ower freely about his betters. I trow he will hae lost the best pen-feather o’ his wing before to-morrow morning. — Farewell, Elshie; there’s some canny boys waiting for me down amang the shaws, owerbye; I will see you as I come back, and bring ye a blythe tale in return for your leech-craft.”

Ere the Dwarf could collect himself to reply, the Reiver of Westburnflat set spurs to his horse. The animal, starting at one of the stones which lay scattered about, flew from the path. The rider exercised his spurs without moderation or mercy. The horse became furious, reared, kicked, plunged and bolted like a deer, with all his four feet off the ground at once. It was in vain; the unrelenting rider sate as if he had been a part of the horse which he bestrode; and, after a short but furious contest, compelled the subdued animal to proceed upon the path, at a rate which soon carried him out of sight of the Solitary.

“That villain,” exclaimed the Dwarf, — “that cool-blooded, hardened, unrelenting ruffian, — that wretch, whose every thought is infected with crimes, — has thewes and sinews, limbs strength, and activity enough to compel a nobler animal than himself to carry him to the place where he is to perpetrate his wickedness; while I, had I the weakness to wish to put his wretched victim on his guard, and to save the helpless family, would see my good intentions frustrated by the decrepitude which chains me to the spot. — Why should I wish it were otherwise? What has my screech-owl voice, my hideous form, and my mis-shapen features, to do with the

fairer workmanship of nature? Do not men receive even my benefits with shrinking horror and ill-suppressed disgust? And why should I interest myself in a race which account me a prodigy and an outcast, and who have treated me as such? No; by all the ingratitude which I have repaid — by all the wrongs which I have sustained — by my imprisonment, my stripes, my chains, I will wrestle down my feelings of rebellious humanity — I will not be the fool I have been, to swerve from my principles whenever there was an appeal, forsooth, to my feelings, as if I, towards whom none show sympathy, ought to have sympathy with any one. Let Destiny drive forth her scythed car through the overwhelmed and trembling mass of humanity! — Shall I be the idiot to throw this decrepit form, this mis-shapen lump of mortality, under her wheels, that the Dwarf, the Wizard, the Hunch-back, may save from destruction some fair form or some active frame, and all the world clap their hands at the exchange? No, never! — And yet this Elliot — this Hobbie, so young and gallant, so frank, so — I will think of it no longer. I cannot aid him if I would, and I am resolved — firmly resolved, that I would not aid him, if a wish were the pledge of his safety!”

Having thus ended his soliloquy, he retreated into his hut for shelter from the storm which was fast approaching, and now began to burst in large and heavy drops of rain. The last rays of the sun now disappeared entirely, and two or three claps of distant thunder followed each other at brief intervals, echoing and reechoing among the range of heathy fells like the sound of a distant engagement.


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CHAPTER VII.

*Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be  
torn! —*

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*Return to thy dwelling; all lonely, return;  
For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it  
stood,  
And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing  
brood.*

*Campbell.*

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THE night continued to be sullen and stormy; but morning rose as if refreshed by the rains. Even the Mucklestane-Moor, with its broad bleak swells of barren grounds, interspersed with marshy pools of water, seemed to smile under the serene influence of the sky, just as good-humour can spread a certain inexpressible charm over the plainest human countenance. The heath was in its thickest and deepest bloom. The bees, which the Solitary had added to



his rural establishment, were abroad and on the wing, and filled the air with the murmurs of their industry. As the old man crept out of his little hut, his two shegoats came to meet him, and licked his hands in gratitude for the vegetables with which he supplied them from his garden. „You, at least,” he said — „you, at least, see no differences in form which can alter your feelings to a benefactor — to you, the finest shape that ever statuary moulded would be an object of indifference or of alarm, should it present itself instead of the mutilated trunk to whose services you are accustomed. While I was in the world, did I ever meet with such a return of gratitude? — No — the domestic whom I had bred from infancy made mouths at me as he stood behind my chair; the friend whom I had supported with my fortune, and for whose sake I had even stained — (he stopped with a strong convulsive shudder) even he thought me more fit for the society of lunatics — for their disgraceful restraint — for their cruel privations, than for communication with the rest of humanity. — Hubert alone — and Hubert too will one day abandon me — all are of a piece, one mass of wickedness, selfishness, and ingratitude — wretches, who sin even in their devotions; and of such hardness of heart, that they do not, without



hypocrisy, even thank the Deity himself for his warm sun and pure air."

As he was plunged in these gloomy soliloquies, he heard the tramp of a horse on the other side of his inclosure, and a strong clear bass voice singing with the liveliness inspired by a light heart,

Canny Hobbie Elliot, canny Hobbie now,  
Canny Hobbie Elliot, I'se gang along wi' you.

At the same moment, a large deer greyhound sprung over the Hermit's fence. It is well known to the sportsmen in these wilds, that the appearance and scent of the goat so much resembles that of their usual objects of chase, that the best broke greyhounds will sometimes fly upon them. The dog in question instantly pulled down and throttled one of the Hermit's shegoats, while Hobbie Elliot, who came up, and jumped from his horse for the purpose, was unable to extricate the harmless animal from the fangs of his attendant until it was expiring. The Dwarf eyed, for a few moments, the convulsive starts of his dying favourite, until the poor goat stretched out her limbs with the twitches and shivering fit of the last agony. He then started into an access of frenzy, and,



unsheathing a long sharp knife, or dagger, which he wore under his coat, he was about to launch it at the dog, when Hobbie, perceiving his purpose, interposed, and caught hold of his hand, exclaiming, "Let a be the hound, man — let a be the hound — na, na, Killbuck manna be guided that gate, neither."

The Dwarf turned his rage on the young farmer; and, by a sudden effort, far more powerful than Hobbie expected from such a person, freed his wrist from his grasp, and offered the dagger at his heart. All this was done in the twinkling of an eye, and the incensed Recluse might have completed his vengeance by plunging the weapon in Elliot's bosom, had he not been checked by an internal impulse which made him hurl the knife to a distance.

"No," he exclaimed, as he thus voluntarily deprived himself of the means of gratifying his rage; "not again — not again!"

Hobbie retreated a step or two in great surprise, discomposure, and disdain, at having been placed in such danger by an object apparently so contemptible.

"The de'il's in the body for strength and bitterness!" were the first words that escaped



him, which he followed up with an apology for the accident that had given rise to their disagreement. "I am no justifying Kilbuck a'the-gether neither, and I am sure it is as vexing to me as to you, Elshie, that the mischance should hae happened; but I'll send you twa goats and twa fat gimmers, man, to make a' straight again. A wise man like you shouldna bear malice against a poor dumb thing; ye see that a goat's like first cousin to a deer, sae he acted but according to his nature after a'. Had it been a pet-lamb, there wad hae been mair to be said. Ye suld keep sheep, Elshie, and no goats, where there's sae mony deer-hounds about — but I'll send ye baith."

"Wretch!" said the Hermit, "your cruelty has destroyed one of the only creatures in existence that would look on me with kindness."

"Dear, Elshie, I'm wae you suld hae cause to say sae; I'm sure it wasna wi' my will. — And yet, it's true, I should hae minded your goats, and coupled up the dogs. I'm sure I would rather they had worried the primest wether in my faulds. — Come, man, forget and forgie. I'm e'en as vexed as ye can be — But I am a bridegroom, ye see, and that puts a' things out o' my head, I think. There's the marriage dinner, or gude part o't, that my twa



brithers are bringing on a sled round by the Riders' Slack, three goodly bucks as ever ran on Dallom-lea, as the sang says; they couldna come the straight road for the saft grund. I wad send ye a bit venison, but ye wadna take it weel maybe, for Killbuck caught it."

During this long speech, in which the good-natured Borderer endeavoured to propitiate the offended Dwarf by every argument he could think of, he heard him with his eyes bent on the ground, as if in the deepest meditation, and at length broke forth — "Nature? — yes! it is indeed in the usual beaten path of Nature. The strong gripe and throttle the weak; the rich depress and despoil the needy; the happy (those who are idiots enough to think themselves happy) insult the misery, and diminish the consolation of the wretched. — Go hence, thou who hast contrived to give an additional pang to the most miserable of human beings — thou who hast deprived me of what I half considered as a source of comfort. Go hence, and enjoy the happiness prepared for thee at home!"

"Never stir," said Hobbie, "if I wadna take you wi' me, man, if ye wad but say it wad divert ye to be at the bridal on Monday. There will be a hundred strapping Elliots to ride the brouze — the like's no been seen sin the days



of auld Martin of the Preakin-tower — I wad send the sled for ye wi' a canny powny."

"Is it to me you propose once more to mix in the society of the common herd?"

"Commons!" retorted Hobbie, "nae siccan commons neither; the Elliots hae been lang kenn'd a gentle race."

"Hence! begone!" reiterated the Dwarf; "may the same evil luck attend thee that thou hast left behind with me! If I go not with you myself, see if you can escape what my attendants, Wrath and Misery, have brought to thy threshold before thee."

"I wish ye wadna speak that gate," said Hobbie. "Ye ken yoursel, Elshie, naebody judges you to be ower canny; now I'll tell ye just ae word for a' — ye hae spoken as muckle as wussing ill to me and mine; now, if ony mischance happen to Grace, which God forbid, or to mysel, or to the poor dumb tyke; or if I be skaithed and injured in body, gudes, or gear, I'll no forget wha it is that it's owing to."

"Out, hind!" exclaimed the Dwarf; "home! home to your dwelling, and think on me when you find what has befallen there."



“Aweel, aweel,” said Hobbie, mounting his horse, “it serves naething to strive wi’ cripples, they are aye cankered; but I’ll just tell ye ae thing, neighbour, that if things be otherwise than weel wi’ Grace Armstrong, I’se gi’e you a scouter if there be a tar-barrel in the five parishes.”

So saying, he rode off; and Elshie, after looking at him with a scornful and indignant laugh, took spade and mattock, and occupied himself in digging a grave for his deceased favourite.

A low whistle, and the words, “Hist, Elshie, hist!” disturbed him in this melancholy occupation. He looked up, and the Red Reiver of Westburnflat was before him. Like Banquo’s murderer, there was blood on his face, as well as upon the rowels of his spurs and the sides of his overriden horse.

“How now, ruffian?” demanded the Dwarf, “is thy job chared?”

“Ay, ay, doubt not that, Elshie,” answered the freebooter; “when I ride, my foes may moan. They have had mair light than comfort at the Heugh-foot this morning; there’s a toom byre and a wide, and a wail and a cry for the bonny bride.”

“The bride?”



“Ay; Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie, as we ca’ him, that’s Charlie Foster of Tinning Beck, has promised to keep her in Cumberland till the blast blaw bye. She saw me, and kenn’d me in the splore, for the mask fell frae my face for a blink. I am thinking it wad concern my safety if she were to come back here, for there’s mony o’ the Elliots, and they band weel thegi-ther for right or wrang. Now, what I chiefly come to ask your rede in, is, how to make her sure?”

“Would’st thou murder her, then?”

“Umph! no, no; that I would not do, if I could help it. But they say they can whiles get folk cannily away to the plantations from some of the out-ports, and something to boot for them that brings a bonny wench. They’re wanted beyond seas thae female cattle, and they’re no that scarce here. But I think o’ doing better for this lassie. There’s a led-ly, that, unless she be a’ the better bairn, is to be sent to foreign parts whether she will or no; now, I think of sending Grace to wait on her — she’s a bonny lassie. Hobbie will hae a merry morning when he comes hame, and misses baith bride and gear.”

“Ay; and do you not pity him?”



“Wad he pity me were I gaeing up the Castle-hill at Jeddart? \* And yet I rue something for the bit lassie; but he’ll get anither, and little skaith dune — ane is as gude as anither. And now, you that like to hear o’ splores, heard ye ever o’ a better ane than I hae had this morning?”

“Air, ocean, and fire,” said the Dwarf, speaking to himself, “the earthquake, the tempest, the volcano, are all mild and moderate, compared to the wrath of man. And what is this fellow, but one more skilled than others in executing the end of his existence? — Hear me, felon, go again where I before sent thee.”

“To the steward?”

“Ay; and tell him, Elshender the Recluse commands him to give thee gold. But, hear me, let the maiden be discharged free and uninjured; return her to her friends, and let her swear not to discover thy villainy.”

“Swear?” said Westburnflat, “but what if she break her aith? Women are not famous

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\* The place of execution at that ancient burgh, where many of Westburnflat’s profession have made their final exit.



for keeping their plight. A wise man like you should ken that. — And uninjured — wha kens what may happen were she to be left lang at Tinning-Beck? Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie is a rough customer. But if the gold could be made up to twenty pieces, I think I could insure her being wi' her friends within the twenty-four hours."

The Dwarf took his tablets from his pocket, marked a line in them, and tore out the leaf. "There," he said, giving the robber the leaf. — "But, mark me; thou knowest I am not to be fooled by thy treachery; if thou darest to disobey my directions, thy wretched life, be sure, shall answer it."

"I know," said the fellow, looking down, "that you have power on earth, however you came by it; you can do what nae other man can do, baith by physic and foresight; and the gold is shelled down when ye command, as fast as I have seen the ash-keys fall in a frosty morning in October. I will not disobey you."

"Begone, then, and relieve me of thy hateful presence."

The robber set spurs to his horse, and rode on without reply.



Hobbie Elliot had, in the meanwhile, pursued his journey rapidly, harassed by those oppressive and indistinct fears that all was not right, which men usually term a presentiment of misfortune. Ere he reached the top of the bank from which he could look down on his own habitation, he was met by his nurse, a person, then, of great consequence in all families in Scotland, whether of the higher or middling classes. The connection between them and their foster-children was considered a tie far too dearly intimate to be broken; and it usually happened, in the course of years, that the nurse became a resident in the family of her foster son, assisting in the domestic duties, and receiving all marks of attention and regard from the heads of the family. So soon as Hobbie recognized the figure of Annapple, in her red cloak and black hood, he could not help exclaiming to himself, "What ill luck can hae brought the auld nurse sae far frae hame, her that never stirs a gunshot frae the door-stane for ordinar? — Hout, it will just be to get crane-berries, or whortle-berries, or some such stuff, out of the moss, to make the pyes and tarts for the feast on Monday. — I cannot get the words of that cankered, auld, cripple deil's-buckie out o' my head — the least thing makes me dread some ill news. — O, Killbuck, man!



were there nae deer and goats in the country besides, but ye behoved to gang and worry his creature, bye a' other folks'?"

By this time Annapple, with a brow like a tragic volume, had hobbled towards him, and caught his horse by the bridle. The despair in her look was so evident as to deprive him even of the power of asking the cause. "O my bairn!" she cried, "gang na forward — gang na forward — it's a sight to kill ony body, let alane thee."

"In God's name, what's the matter?" said the astonished horseman, endeavouring to extricate his bridle from the grasp of the old woman; "for Heaven's sake, let me go and see what's the matter."

"Ohon! that I should have lived to see the day! — The steading's a' in a low, and the bonny stack-yard lying in the red ashes, and the gear a' driven away. But gang na forward; it wad break your young heart, hinny, to see what my auld e'en hae seen this morning."

"And who has dared to do this? let go my bridle, Annapple — where is my grandmother — my sisters? — Where is Grace Armstrong? — God! — the words of the warlock are knelling in my ears!"



He sprung from his horse to rid himself of Annapple's interruption, and, ascending the hill with great speed, soon came in view of the spectacle with which she had threatened him. It was indeed a heart-breaking sight. The habitation which he had left in its seclusion, beside the mountain stream, surrounded with every evidence of rustic plenty, was now a wasted and blackened ruin. From amongst the shattered and sable walls the smoke continued to rise. The turf-stack, the barn-yard, the offices, stocked with cattle, all the wealth of an upland cultivator of the period, of which poor Elliot possessed no common share, had been laid waste or carried off in a single night. He stood a moment motionless, and then exclaimed, "I am ruined — ruined to the ground! — But curse on the world's gear — Had it not been the week before my bridal — But I am nae babe, to sit down and greet about it. If I can but find Grace, and my grandmother, and my sisters weel, I can go to the wars in Flanders, as my gude-sire did wi' auld Buccleuch — At ony rate, I will keep up a heart, or they will lose theirs a' thegither."

Manfully strode Hobbie down the hill, resolved to suppress his own despair, and administer consolation which he did not feel. The



neighbouring inhabitants of the dell, particularly those of his own name, had already assembled. The younger part were in arms and clamorous for revenge, although they knew not upon whom; the elder were taking measures for the relief of the distressed family. Annaple's cottage, which was situated down the brook, at some distance from the scene of mischief, had been hastily adapted for the temporary accommodation of the old lady and her daughters, with such articles as had been contributed by the neighbours, for very little was saved from the wreck.

"Are we to stand here a' day, sirs," exclaimed one tall young man, "and look at the burnt wa's of our kinsman's house? Every wreath of the reek is a blast of shame upon us! Let us to horse, and take the chase. — Wha has the nearest bloodhound?"

"It's young Earnscliff," answered another; "and he's been on and away wi' six horse lang syne, to see if he can track them."

"Let us follow him then, and raise the country, and make mair help as we ride, and then have at the Cumberland reivers — Take, burn, and slay — they that lie nearest us shall smart first."



“Whisht! haud your tongues, daft callants,” said an old man, “ye dinna ken what ye speak about. What! wad ye raise war atween twa pacificated countries?”

“And what signifies deaving us wi’ tales about our fathers,” retorted the young man, “if we’re to sit and see our friends’ houses burned ower their heads, and no put out a hand to revenge them? Our fathers didna do that, I trow.”

“I am no saying ony thing against revenging Hobbie’s wrang, puir chield; but we maun take the law wi’ us in thae days, Simon,” answered the more prudent elder.

“And, besides,” said another old man, “I dinna believe there’s ane now living that kens the lawfu’ mode of following a fray across the Border. Tam o’ Whittram kenn’d a’ about it, but he died in the hard winter.”

“Ay,” said a third, “he was at the great gathering, when they chased as far as Thirlwall — it was the year after the fight at Philiphaugh.”

“Hout!” exclaimed another of these discord-ing connsellors, “there’s nae great skill needed; just put a lighted peat on the end of a spear, or hay-fork, or something, and blaw a horn, and cry the gathering-word, and then it’s lawfu’



to follow gear into England, and recover it by the strong hand, or to take gear frae some other Englishman, providing ye lift nae mair than's been lifted frae you, — that's the auld Border law, made at Drundennan, in the days of the Black Douglas. De'il ane need doubt it."

"Come away, then, lads," cried Simon, "get to your geldings, and we'll take auld Cuddy the muckle tasker wi' us; he kens the value o' the stock and plenishing that's been lost. Hobbie's stalls and stakes shall be fou again or night; and if we canna big up the auld house sae soon, we'se lay an English ane as low as Heugh-foot is — and that's fair play, a' the world ower."

This animating proposal was received with great applause by the younger part of the assemblage, when a whisper ran among them, "There's Hobbie himsel, puir fallow; we'll be guided by him."

The principal sufferer, having now reached the bottom of the hill, pushed on through the crowd, unable, from the tumultuous state of his feelings, to do more than receive and return the grasps of the friendly hands by which his neighbours and kinsmen mutely expressed their sympathy in his misfortune. While he pressed Simon of Hackburn's hand, his anxiety at length



found words. "Thank ye, Simon — thank ye, neighbours — I ken what ye wad a' say — But where are they? — Where are" — He stopped, as if afraid even to name the objects of his enquiry; and, with a similar feeling, his kinsmen, without reply, pointed to the hut, into which Hobbie precipitated himself with the desperate air of one who is resolved to know the worst at once. A general expression of sympathy accompanied him. — "Ah, puir fallow — puir Hobbie!"

"He'll learn the warst o't, now!"

"But I trust Earnscliff will get some speerings o' the puir lassie."

Such were the exclamations of the group, which, having no acknowledged leader to direct their motions, passively awaited the return of the sufferer, and determined to be guided by his directions.

The meeting between Hobbie and his family was in the highest degree affecting. His sisters threw themselves upon him, and almost stifled him with their caresses, as if to prevent his looking round to distinguish the absence of one yet more beloved.

"God help thee, my son! He can help, when worldly trust is a broken reed."



Such was the welcome of the matron to her unfortunate grandson. He looked eagerly round, holding two of his sisters by the hand, while the third hung about his neck — “I see you — I count you — My grandmother, Liliias, Jean, and Annot; but where is —” he hesitated, and then continued, as if with an effort, — “Where is Grace? Surely this is not a time to hide herself frae me — there’s nae time for daffing now.”

“O brother!” and “Our poor Grace!” was the only answer his questions could procure, till his grandmother rose up, and gently disengaging him from the weeping girls, led him to a seat, and, with the affecting serenity which sincere piety, like oil sprinkled on the waves, can throw over the most acute feelings, she said, “My bairn, when thy grandfather was killed in the wars, and left me with six orphans around me, with scarce bread to eat, or a roof to cover us, I had strength, — not of mine own — but I had strength given me to say, The Lord’s will be done! My son, our peaceful house was last night broken into by moss-troopers, armed and masked; they have taken and destroyed all, and carried off our dear Grace; — pray for strength to say, His will be done.”

“Mother! mother! urge me not — I cannot



— not now — I am a sinful man, and of a hardened race. — Masked — armed — Grace carried off! Gi'e me my sword, and my father's knapsack — I will have vengeance, if I should go to the pit of darkness to seek it!"

"O my bairn, my bairn! be patient under the rod. Who knows when He may lift his hand off from us? Young Earnscliff, Heaven bless him, has tae'en the chase, with Davie of Stenhouse, and the first comers. I cried to let house and plenishing burn, and follow the reivers to recover Grace, and Earnscliff and his men were ower the Fell within three hours after the deed. God bless him; he's a real Earnscliff — he's his father's true son — a leal friend."

"A true friend, indeed; God bless him!" exclaimed Hobbie; "let's on and away, and take the chase after him."

"O, my child, before you run on danger, let me hear you but say, His will be done!"

"Urge me not, mother — not now." He was rushing out, when, looking back, he observed his grandmother make a mute attitude of affliction. He returned hastily, threw himself into her arms, and said, "Yes, mother, I can say His will be done, since it will comfort you."



“May He go forth — may He go forth with you, my dear bairn; and O, may He give you cause to say on your return, His name be praised!”

“Farewell, mother! — farewell, my dear sisters!” exclaimed Elliot, and rushed out of the house.



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## CHAPTER VIII.

*“Now horse and hattock,” cried the laird, —  
 “Now horse and hattock, speedilie;  
 They that winna ride for Telfer’s kye,  
 Let them never look in the face o’ me.”*

### *Border Ballad.*

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„HORSE! horse! and spear!” exclaimed Hobbie to his kinsmen. — Many a ready foot was in the stirrup; and, while Elliot hastily collected arms and accoutrements, no easy matter in such a confusion, the glen resounded with the approbation of his younger friends.

“Ay, ay!” exclaimed Simon of Hackburn, “thats the gate to take it, Hobbie. Let women sit and greet at hame, men must do as they have been done by; it’s the Scripture say’st.”

“Haud your tongue, sir,” said one of the seniors, sternly; “dinna abuse the Word that gate, ye dinna ken what ye speak about.”



“Hae ye ony tidings? — Hae ye ony speerings, Hobbie? — O, callants, dinna be ower hasty,” said old Dick of the Dingle.

“What signifies preaching to us e’enow,” said Simon; “if ye canna make help yoursel, dinna keep them back that can.”

“Whisht, sir; wad ye take vengeance or ye ken wha has wrang’d ye?”

“D’ye think we dinna ken the road to England as weel as our fathers before us? — All evil comes out o’ thereaway — its an auld saying and a true; and we’ll e’en away there, as if the devil were blawing us south.”

“We’ll follow the track o’ Earnscliff’s horses ower the waste,” cried one Elliot.

“I’ll prick them out through the blindest moor in the Border an’ there had been a fair held there the day before,” said Hugh the blacksmith of Ringleburn, “for I aye shoe his horse wi’ my ain hand.”

“Lay on the deer-hounds,” cried another; “where are they?”

“Hout, man, the sun’s been lang up, and the dew is aff the grund — the scent will never lie.”



Hobbie instantly whistled on his hounds, which were roving about the ruins of their old habitation, and filling the air with their doleful howls.

“Now, Killbuck,” said Hobbie, “try thy skill this day” — and then, as if a light had suddenly broke on him, — “that illfa’ard goblin spak something o’ this. He may ken mair o’t, either by villains on earth, or devils below — I’ll hae it frae him, if I should cut it out o’ his misshapen bouk wi’ my whinger.” He then hastily gave directions to his comrades. “Four o’ ye, wi’ Simon, haud right forward to Graemes’gap. If they’re English, they’ll be for being back that way. The rest disperse by twosome and threesome through the waste, and meet me at the Trysting-pool. Tell my brothers, when they come up, to follow and meet us there — Puir lads, they will hae hearts weel nigh as sair as mine — little think they what a sorrowful house they are bringing their venison to — I’ll ride ower Mucklestane-Moor mysel.”

“And if I were you,” said Dick of the Dingle, “I would speak to Canny Elshie, He can tell ye whatever betides in this land, if he’s sae minded.”



“He *shall* tell me,” said Hobbie, who was busy putting his arms in order, “what he kens o’ this night’s job, or I shall right weel ken wherefore he does not.”

“Ay, but speak him fair, my bonny man — speak him fair, Hobbie; the like o’ him will no bear thraving. They converse sae muckle wi’ thae fractious ghaists and evil spirits, that it clean spoils their temper.”

“Let me alane to guide him,” answered Hobbie; “there’s that in my breast this day, that would ower-maister a’ the warlocks on earth, and a’ the devils in hell.”

And being now fully equipped, he threw himself on his horse, and spurred him at a rapid trot against the steep ascent.

Elliot speedily surmounted the hill, rode down the other side at the same rate, crossed a wood, and traversed a long glen, ere he at length regained Mucklestane-Moor. As he was obliged, in the course of his journey, to relax his speed in consideration of the labour which his horse might still have to undergo, he had time to consider maturely in what manner he should address the Dwarf, in order to extract from him the knowledge which he supposed him to be in possession of concerning the au-



thors of his misfortunes. Hobbie, though blunt, plain of speech, and hot of disposition, like most of his countrymen, was by no means deficient in the shrewdness which is also their characteristic. He reflected, that from what he had observed on the memorable night when the Dwarf was first seen, and from the conduct of that mysterious being ever since he was likely to be rendered even more obstinate in his sullenness by threats and violence.

“I’ll speak him fair,” he said, “as auld Dickon advised me. Though folk say he has a league wi’ Satan, he canna be sic an incarnate devil as no to take some pity in a case like mine; and folk threep he’ll whiles do good, charitable sort o’ things. I’ll keep my heart down as weel as I can, and stroke him wi’ the hair; and if the warst come to the warst, it’s but wringing the head o’ him about at last.”

In this disposition of accommodation he approached the hut of the Solitary.

The old man was not upon his seat of audience, nor could Hobbie perceive him in his garden, or enclosures.

“He’s gotten into his very Keep,” said Hobbie, “maybe to be out o’ the gate; but I’s pu’



it down about his lugs, if I canna win at him otherwise."

Having thus communed with himself, he raised his voice, and invoked Elshie in a tone as supplicating as his conflicting feelings would permit, "Elshie, my gude friend," No reply. "Elshie, canny Father Elshie." The Dwarf remained mute. "Sorrow be in the crooked carcase of thee," said the Borderer between his teeth, and then again attempting a soothing tone; "good Father Elshie, a most miserable creature desires some counsel of your wisdom."

"The better!" answered the shrill and discordant voice of the Dwarf through a very small window, resembling an arrowslit, which he had constructed near the door of his dwelling, and through which he could see any one who approached it, without the possibility of their looking in upon him.

"The better!" said Hobbie impatiently; "what is the better, Elshie? Do you not hear me tell you I am the most miserable wretch living?"

"And do you not hear me tell you it is so much the better? and did I not tell you this morning, when you thought yourself so happy, what an evening was coming upon you?"



“That ye did e’en,” replied Hobbie, “and that gars me come to you for advice now; they that foresaw the trouble maun ken the cure.”

“I know no cure for earthly trouble,” returned the Dwarf; “or, if I did, why should I help others, when none hath aided me? Have I not lost wealth, that would have bought all thy barren hills a hundred times over? rank, to which thine is as that of a peasant? society, where there was an interchange of all that was amiable — of all that was intellectual? Have I not lost all this? Am I not residing here, the veriest outcast on the face of Nature, in the most hideous and most solitary of her retreats, myself more hideous than all that is around me? And why should other worms complain to me when they are trodden on, since I am myself lying crushed and writhing under the chariot-wheel?”

“Ye may have lost all this,” answered Hobbie, in the bitterness of emotion; “land and friends, goods and gear; ye may hae lost them a’ — but ye ne’er can hae sae sair a heart as mine, for ye ne’er lost nae Grace Armstrong. And now my last hopes are gane, and I shall ne’er see her mair.”



This he said in the tone of deepest emotion — and there followed a deep pause, for the mention of his bride's name had overcome the more angry and irritable feelings of poor Hobbie. Ere he had again addressed the Solitary, the bony hand and long fingers of the latter, holding a large leathern bag, was thrust forth at the small window, and as it unclutched the burden, and let it drop with a clang upon the ground, his harsh voice again addressed Elliot.

„There — there lies a salve for every human ill; so, at least, each human wretch readily thinks — Begone; return twice as wealthy as thou wert before yesterday, and torment me no more with questions, complaints, or thanks; they are alike odious to me.”

„It is a' gowd, by Heavens!” said Elliot, having glanced at the contents; and then again addressing the Hermit, Muckle obliged for your good-will; and I wad blythely gie you a bond for some o' the siller, or a wadset ower the lands o' Wideopen. But I dinna ken, Elshie; to be free wi' you, I dinna like to use siller unless I kenn'd it was decently come by; and may be it might turn into sclatestanes, and cheat some poor man.”

„Ignorant idiot!” retorted the Dwarf, „the trash is as genuine poison as ever was dug out



of the bowels of the earth. Take it — use it, and may it thrive with you as it hath done with me!”

„But I tell you,” said Elliot, „it was na about the gear that I was consulting you, — it was a braw barn-yard, doubtless, and thirty head of finer cattle there were na on this side of the Cat-rail; but let the gear gang, — if ye could but gi’e me speerings o’ puir Grace, I would be content to be your slave for life, in ony thing that didna touch my salvation. O Elshie, speak, man, speak!”

„Well, then,” answered the Dwarf, as if worn out by his importunity, „since thou hast not enough of woes of thine own, but must needs seek to burden thyself with those of a partner, seek her whom thou hast lost in the *West*.”

„In the *West*? That’s a wide word.”

„It is the last,” said the Dwarf, „which I design to utter;” and he drew the shutters of his window, leaving Hobbie to make the most of the hint he had given.

The west! the west! — thought Elliot; the country is pretty quiet down that way, unless it were Jock o’ the Todholes; and he’s ower auld now for the like o’ thae jobs. — *West!*



— By my life, it must be Westburnflat. „Elshie, just tell me one word. Am I right? Is it Westburnflat? If I am wrang, say sae I wadna like to wyte an innocent neighbour wi' violence — No answer? — It must be the Red Reiver — I didna think he would hae ventured on me neither, and sae mony kin as there's of us — I am thinking he'll hae some better backing than his Cumberland friends. — Fareweel to you, Elshie, and mony thanks — I dounna be fashed wi' the siller e'en now, for I maun awa' to meet my friends at the Trysting-place — Sae, if ye carena to open the window, ye can fetch it in after I am awa'.”

Still there was no reply.

„He's deaf. or he's daft, or he's baith; but I hae nae time to stay to claver wi' him.”

And off rode Hobbie Elliot towards the place of rendezvous which he had named to his friends.

Four or five riders were already gathered at the Trysting-pool. They stood in close consultation together, while their horses were permitted to graze among the poplars which overhung the broad still pool. A more numerous party were seen coming from the southward. It proved to be Earnscliff and his party, who had followed the track of the cattle as far as



the English border, but had halted on the information that a considerable force was drawn together under some of the jacobite gentlemen in that district, and there were tidings of insurrection in different parts of Scotland. This took away from the act which had been perpetrated, the appearance of private animosity, or love of plunder; and Earnscliff was now disposed to regard it as a symptom of civil war. The young gentleman greeted Hobbie with the most sincere sympathy, and informed him of the news he had received. "Then, may I never stir frae the bit," said Elliot, "if auld Ellieslaw is not at the bottom o' the hale villainy! Ye see he's leagued wi' the Cumberland Catholics; and that agrees weel wi' what Elshie hinted about Westburnflat, for Ellieslaw aye protected him, and he will want to harry and disarm the country about his ain hand before he breaks out."

Some now remembered that the party of ruffians had been heard to say they were acting for James VIII. and were charged to disarm all rebels. Others had heard Westburnflat boast that Ellieslaw would soon be in arms for the jacobite cause, and that he himself was to hold a command under him, and that they would be bad neighbours for young Earnscliff, and all that stood out for the established govern-



ment, The result was a strong belief that Westburnflat had headed the party under Ellieslaw's orders, and they resolved to proceed instantly to the house of the former, and, if possible, to secure his person. They were by this time joined by so many of their dispersed friends, that their number amounted to upwards of twenty horsemen, well mounted, and tolerably, though variously, armed.

A brook, which issued from a narrow glen among the hills, entered, at Westburnflat, upon the open marshy level, which, expanded about half a mile in every direction, gives name to the spot. In this place the character of the stream becomes changed, and, from being a lively brisk-running mountain-torrent, it stagnates, like a blue swollen snake, in dull deep windings through the swampy level. On the side of the stream, and nearly about the centre of the plain, arose the Tower of Westburnflat, one of the few remaining strong-holds formerly so numerous upon the Borders. The ground upon which it stood was gently elevated above the marsh for the space of about a hundred yards, affording an esplanade of dry turf, which extended itself in the immediate neighbourhood of the tower; but, beyond which, the surface presented to strangers was that of an impassable



and dangerous bog. The owner of the tower and his inmates alone knew the winding and intricate paths; which, leading over ground that was comparatively sound, admitted visitors to his residence. But among the party which were assembled under Earnscliff's directions, there was more than one person qualified to act as a guide. For although the owner's character and habits of life were generally known, yet the laxity of feeling with respect to property, prevented his being looked on with the abhorrence with which he must have been regarded in a more civilized country. He was considered, among his more peaceable neighbours, pretty much as a gambler, cock-fighter, or horse-jockey, would be regarded at the present day; a person, of course, whose habits were to be condemned, and his society, in general, avoided, yet who could not be considered as marked with the indelible infamy attached to his profession, where laws have been habitually observed. And their indignation was awakened against him upon this occasion, not so much on account of the general nature of the transaction, which was just such as was to be expected from this marauder, as that the violence had been perpetrated upon a neighbour against whom he had no cause of quarrel, against a friend of their own, — above all, against



one of the name of Elliot, to which clan most of them belonged. It was not, therefore, wonderful that there should be several in the band pretty well acquainted with the locality of his habitation, and capable of giving such directions and guidance as soon placed the whole party on the open space of firm ground in front of the Tower of Westburnflat.



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## CHAPTER IX.

*So spak the knicht; the geaunt sed,  
Lead forth with the, the sely maid,  
And mak me quite of the and sche;  
For glaunsing ce, or brow so brent,  
Or cheek with rose and lilye blent,  
Me lists not ficht with the.*

### *Romaunce of the Falcon.*

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THE tower, before which the party now stood, was a small square building, of the most gloomy aspect. The walls were of great thickness, and the windows, or slits which served the purpose of windows, seemed rather calculated to afford the defenders the means of employing missile weapons than for admitting air or light to the apartments within. A small battlement projected over the walls on every side, and afforded farther advantage of defence by its niched parapet, within which arose a steep roof, flag-



ged with grey stones. A single turret at one angle, defended by a door studded with huge iron nails, rose above the battlement, and gave access to the roof from within, by the spiral staircase which it enclosed. It seemed to the party that their motions were watched by some one concealed within this turret; and they were confirmed in their belief, when, through a narrow loop-hole, a female hand was seen to wave a handkerchief, as if by way of signal to them. Hobbie was almost out of his senses with joy and eagerness. „It was Grace's hand and arm,” he said; „I can swear to it among a thousand. There is not the like of it on this side of the Lowdens — We'll have her out, lads, if we should carry off the Tower of Westburnflat stane by stane.”

Earnscliff, though he doubted the possibility of recognizing a fair maiden's hand at such a distance from the eye of the lover, would say nothing to damp his friend's animated hopes, and it was resolved to summon the garrison.

The shouts of the party, and the winding of one or two horns, at length brought to a loop-hole, which flanked the entrance, the haggard face of an old woman. — „That's the Reiver's mother,” said one of the Elliots; „she's ten



times waur than himsel, and is wyted for muckle of the ill he does about the country."

"Wha are ye? What d'ye want here?" were the queries of the respectable progenitor.

"We are seeking William Graeme of Westburnflat," said Earnscliff.

"He is no at hame," returned the old dame.

"When did he leave home?" pursued Earnscliff.

"I canna tell," said the portress.

"When will he return?" said Hobbie Elliot.

"I dinna ken naething about it," replied the inexorable guardian of the Keep.

"Is there any body within the tower with you?" again demanded Earnscliff.

"Naebody but mysel and baudrons," said the old woman.

"Then open the gate and admit us," said Earnscliff; "I am a justice of peace, and in search of the evidence of a felony."

"De'il be in their fingers that draws a bolt for ye," retorted the portress; "for mine shall never do it. Think na ye shame o' yoursels, to come here siccan a band o' ye, wi' your



swords and spears, and steelcaps, to frighten a lone widow woman?"

"Our information," said Earnscliff, "is positive; we are seeking goods which have been forcibly carried off, to a great amount."

"And a young woman, that's been cruelly made prisoner, that's worth mair than a' the gear twice told," said Hobbie.

"And I warn you," continued Earnscliff, "that your only way to prove your son's innocence is to give us quiet admittance to search the house."

"And what will ye do, if I carena to thraw the keys, or draw the bolts, or open the grate to sic a clainjamfrie?" said the old dame, scoffingly.

"Force our way wi' the king's keys, and break the neck of every living soul we find in the house, if ye dinna give it ower forthwith!" menaced Hobbie.

"Threatened folks live lang," said the hag, in the same tone of irony; "there's the iron grate, — try your skill on't, lads — it has kept out as gude men as you or now."

So saying, she laughed, and withdrew from the aperture through which she had maintained the parley.



The besiegers now held a serious consultation. The immense thickness of the walls, and the small size of the windows, might, for a time, have even resisted cannon-shot. The entrance was secured, first, by a strong grated door, composed entirely of hammered iron, of such ponderous strength as seemed calculated to resist any force that could be brought against it. "Pinches or forehammers will never pick upon't," said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn; "ye might as weel batter at it wi' pipe-stapples."

Within the door-way, and at the distance of nine feet, which was the solid thickness of the wall, there was a second door of oak, crossed, both breadth and length ways, with clenched bars of iron, and studded full of broad-headed nails. Besides all these defences, they were by no means confident in the truth of the old dame's assertion, that she alone composed the garrison. The more knowing of the party had observed hoof-marks in the track by which they approached the tower, which seemed to indicate that several persons had very lately passed in that direction.

To all these difficulties were added their want of means for attacking the place. There was no hope of procuring ladders long enough to reach the battlements, and the windows, besides



being very narrow, were secured with iron bars. Scaling was therefore out of the question; mining was still more so, for want of tools and of gunpowder; neither were the besiegers provided with food, means of shelter, or other conveniences, which might have enabled them to convert the siege into a blockade; and there would, at any rate, have been a risk of relief from some of the marauder's comrades. Hobbie grinded and gnashed his teeth, as, walking round the fastness, he could devise no means of making a forcible entry. At length he suddenly exclaimed, "And what for no do as our fathers did lang syne? — Put hand to the wark, lads. Let us cut up bushes and briars, pile them before the door and set fire to them, and smoke that auld devil's dam as if she were to be reested for bacon."

All immediately closed with this proposal, and some went to work with swords and knives to cut down the alder and hawthorn bushes which grew by the side of the sluggish stream, many of which were sufficiently decayed and dried for their purpose, while others began to collect them in a large stack properly disposed for burning as close to the iron grate as they could be piled. Fire was speedily obtained from one of their guns, and Hobbie was already



advancing to the pile with a kindled brand, when the surly face of the robber, and the muzzle of a musketoon, were partially shewn at a shot-hole which flanked the entrance. „Mony thanks to ye,” he said scoffingly, „for collecting sae muckle winter eilding for us; but if ye step a foot nearer it wi’ that lunt, it’s be the dearest step ye ever made in your days.”

„We’ll sune see that,” said Hobbie, advancing fearlessly with the torch.

The marauder snapped his piece at him, which, fortunately for our honest friend, did not go off; while Earnscliff, firing at the same moment at the narrow aperture and slight mark afforded by the robber’s face, grazed the side of his head with a bullet. He had apparently calculated upon his post affording him more security, for he no sooner felt the wound, though a very slight one, than he requested a parley, and demanded to know what they meant by attacking in this fashion a peaceable and honest man, and shedding his blood in that lawless manner?

„We want your prisoner,” said Earnscliff, „to be delivered up to us in safety.”



„And what concern have you with her?“ replied the marauder.

„That,“ retorted Earnscliff, „you, who are detaining her by force, have no right to enquire.“

„Aweel, I think I can gi’e a guess,“ said the robber. „Weel, sirs, I am laith to enter into deadly feud with you by spilling ony of your bluid, though Earnscliff hasna stopped to shed mine — and he can hit a mark to a groat’s breadth — so, to prevent mair skaith, I am willing to deliver up the prisoner, since nae less will please you.“

„And Hobbie’s gear?“ cried Simon of Hackburn. „D’ye think you’re to be free to plunder our faulds and byres, as if it were an auld wife’s hen-cavey?“

„As I live by bread,“ replied Willie of Westburnflat, „as I live by bread, I have not a single cloot of them; they’re a’ ower the march lang syne; there’s no a horn o’ them about the tower. But I’ll see what o’ them can be gotten back, and I’ll take this day twa days to meet Hobbie at the Castleton wi’ twa friends on ilka side, and see to make an agreement about a’ the wrang he can wyte me wi’.“



“Ay, ay,” said Elliot, “that will do weel aneugh.” — And then aside to his kinsman, “Murrain on the gear! Lordsake, man! say nought about them. Let us but get poor Grace out o’ that auld Hellicat’s clutches.”

“Will ye gie me your word, Earnscliff,” said the marauder, who still lingered at the shot-hole, “your faith and troth, with hand and glove, that I am free to come and free to gae, with five minutes to open the grate, and five minutes to steek it and to draw the bolts? less winna do, for they want creishing sairly. Will ye do this?”

“You shall have full time,” said Earnscliff, “I plight my faith and troth, my hand and glove.”

“Wait there a moment, then,” said Westburnflat; or, hear ye, I wad rather ye wad fa’ back a pistol-shot frae the door. It’s no that I mistrust your word, Earnscliff, but it’s best to be sure.”

“O, friend,” thought Hobbie to himself, as he drew back, “an’ I had you but on Turner’s-holm, naebody bye but twa honest lads to see fair play, I wad make ye wish ye had broken your leg ere ye had touched beast or body that belanged to me.”



“He has a white feather in his wing this same Westburnflat after a’,” said Simon of Hackburn, somewhat scandalized by his ready surrender. “He’ll ne’er fill his father’s boots.”

In the meanwhile, the inner door of the tower was opened, and the mother of the freebooter appeared in the space betwixt that and the outer grate. Willie himself was next seen leading forth a female; and the old woman, carefully bolting the grate behind them, remained on the post as a sort of centinel.

“Ony ane or twa o’ ye come forward,” said the outlaw, “and take her frae my hand hale and sound.”

Hobbie advanced eagerly to meet his betrothed bride. Earnscliff followed more slowly to guard against treachery. Suddenly Hobbie slackened his pace in the deepest mortification, while that of Earnscliff was hastened by impatient surprise. It was not Grace Armstrong, but Miss Isabella Vere, whose liberation had been effected by their appearance before the tower.

“Where is Grace? Where is Grace Armstrong?” exclaimed Hobbie, in the extremity of wrath and indignation.

“Not in my hands,” answered Westburnflat; “ye may search the tower, if ye misdoubt me.”



“You fause villain, you shall account for her, or die on the spot,” said Elliot, presenting his gun.

But his companions, who now came up, instantly disarmed him of his weapon, exclaiming, all at once, “Hand and glove! faith and troth! Haud a’ care, Hobbie, we maun keep our faith with Westburnflat, were he the greatest rogue ever rode.”

Thus protected, the outlaw recovered his audacity, which had been somewhat daunted by the menacing gesture of Elliot.

“I have kept my word, sirs!” he said, “and I look to have nae wrang amang ye. — If this is no the prisoner ye sought,” he said, addressing Earnscliff, “ye’ll render her back to me again. I am answerable for her to those that aught her.”

“For God’s sake, Mr Earnscliff, protect me!” said Miss Vere, clinging to her deliverer; “do not you abandon one whom the whole world seems to have abandoned.”

“Fear nothing,” whispered Earnscliff, “I will protect you with my life.” Then turning to Westburnflat, “Villain!” he said, “how dared you to insult this lady?”



“For that matter, Earnscliff,” answered the freebooter, “I can answer to them that has better right to ask me than you have; but if you come with an armed force, and take her awa’ from them that her friends lodged her wi’, how will you answer that? — But it’s your ain affair — Nae single man can keep a tower against twenty — A’ the men o’ the Mearns downa do mair than they dow.”

“He lies most falsely,” whispered Isabella; “he carried me off by violence from my father.”

“Maybe he only wanted you to think sae, hinny; but its nae business o’ mine, let it be as it may. — So ye winna resign her back to me?”

“Back to you, fellow? Surely no,” answered Earnscliff; “I will protect Miss Vere, and escort her safely wherever she is pleased to be conveyed.”

“Ay, ay, maybe you and her hae settled that already.”

“And Grace?” interrupted Hobbie, shaking himself loose from the friends who had been preaching to him the sanctity of the safe conduct, upon the faith of which the freebooter had ventured from his tower. “Where’s Grace?” and he rushed on the marauder, sword in hand.



Westburnflat thus pressed, after calling out, "God sake, Hobbie, hear me a gliff!" fairly turned his back and fled. His mother stood ready to open and shut the grate; but Hobbie struck at the freebooter as he entered with so much force, that the sword made a considerable cleft in the lintel of the vaulted door, which is still shewn as a memorial of the superior strength of those who lived in the days of yore. Ere Hobbie could repeat the blow, the door was shut and secured, and he was compelled to retreat to his companions, who were now preparing to break up the siege of Westburnflat. They insisted upon his accompanying them in their return.

"Ye hae broken truce already," said old Dick of the Dingle; "an' we take na the better care, ye'll play mair gowk's tricks, and make yoursel the laughing-stock o' the hale country, besides having your friends charged with slaughter under trust. Bide till the meeting at Castleton, as ye hae greed; and if he doesna make ye amends, then we'll hae it out o' his heart's blood. But let us gang reasonably to wark and keep our tryst, and I'se warrant we get back Grace, and the kye an' a'."

This cold-blooded reasoning went ill down with the unfortunate lover; but, as he could



only obtain the assistance of his neighbours and kinsmen on their own terms, he was compelled to acquiesce in their notions of good faith and regular procedure.

Earnscliff now requested the assistance of a few of the party to convey Miss Vere to her father's castle of Ellieslaw, to which she was peremptory in desiring to be conducted. This was readily granted; and five or six young men agreed to attend him as an escort. Hobbie was not of the number. Almost heart broken by the events of the day, and his final disappointment, he returned moodily home to take such measures as he could for the sustenance and protection of his family, and to arrange with his neighbours the farther steps which should be taken for the recovery of Grace Armstrong. The rest of the party dispersed in different directions, as soon as they had crossed the morass. The outlaw and his mother watched them from the tower until they entirely disappeared.

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Scott, Walter,

Tales of my landlord

Bd.: 1

Zwickau 1822

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